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THE CENSUS OF INDIA

AN ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

BY

M. SUBRAYA KAMATH

WITH A FOREWORD BY ANNIE BESANT

THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE

ADYAR, MADRAS, INDIA

1914

To

THE EDITOR

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Adyar, Madras, India

FOREWORD

I HEARTILY commend this little book to the thoughtful study of the young politician, and to the library-table of the older politician as a most valuable and handy book of reference. It is most useful also to the Social Reformer, for, as Mr. Kamath points out, the pages of the Census Report show "the weakest spots in our social customs". Child-widows, the terrible death-toll of women between 15 and 30, the illiteracy of the country, the relative numbers of Hindus and other communities, internal migration, and other important matters, are here tabulated for ready-reference, and we have all the most important statistics placed in our hands in a most convenient form. The author has thus rendered a most important service to accuracy and sound knowledge, and I cordially recommend his little volume.

ANNIE BESANT

PREFACE

As the title of the book indicates, it is based mainly on the Census Report, from which all the unacknowledged quotations are taken. The presentation of the facts is, however, not on the same basis as followed by the Census Commissioner nor have I found it possible to follow him in several of his arguments and inferences. Where I differ from him, I have tried to make my position quite clear and, as far as possible, I have adduced the facts narrated in the Census Report itself in support of my view. Many of the chapters appeared in *The Commonweal*, as separate articles which did not permit the continuity of the different subjects treated therein.

M. Subraya Kamath

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THE CENSUS OF INDIA

CHAPTER I

ITS SIGNIFICANCE

Like many other huge reports based on a mass of statistics, the Report on the Census of India is seldom utilised either by the people or the Press in this country. To the former, it will remain a closed book, not so much on account of its price, but of the uninteresting nature of the information it contains. None can be expected to plod through the 400 pages of the first volume unless as a matter of duty. The report is quite full of details which become more distasteful by monotony, and the subjects dealt with are too varied and often even uninstructive. But to a student of Indian life, both the volumes contain a vast store of useful information, revealing in most cases the weakest spots in our social customs. The knowledge that thousands of children have been declared widows before they had yet acquired the power of speaking, and the adjoining table pointing to a larger number, most of whom, as a natural consequence of the present high rate of infant mortality in

India, are destined to swell the number of widows by the time the enumerators go round in 1921 to specify their civil condition, the vast number of children that, though past ten years of age, are yet ignorant of the three R's, and a hundred other equally telling facts—all these cannot fail to draw forth some response from even a heartless cynic, who, secure in the happiness which perhaps came to him through the exertions of others, refuses to raise his little finger to ameliorate the miserable condition of the less fortunate of his countrymen.

But all this instructive information seldom reaches him. As I have already stated, the Report on the Census of India is, in his opinion, a mass of figures giving the population of each town or village, and thence, by simple addition, of each district and province. The sum total, he knows, was reported to have reached 315 millions, including the population of the Indian States. There has been an increase of nearly 21 millions since the last census was taken, and that testifies, he argues, to a highly satisfactory state of affairs. Enlightened France is threatened with a decreasing population, and the other nations of Europe are on the same track. Thank heaven, he exclaims, that India is still progressing. There was a sudden fall in the increase recorded at the census of 1901. The population increased then by only 7 millions, though the corresponding figures in the two previous decades were 33 and 47 millions. Thus there has been a distinct improvement in 1901—10. Quite true, *if* the progress

of the country is to be based only on the increase in population. I do not, however, intend to discuss here how far the past decade has been progressive, but all the same, the facts that will appear in subsequent chapters on this subject will demonstrate conclusively that our progress, so far as social life is concerned, has been quite insignificant, if not delusive.

CHAPTER II

THE GROWTH OF POPULATION

The population of a country can be analysed in two ways: with reference to the provinces or to the races. Both of these reveal interesting facts in India. The people of the Panjab are so detached from those in the South that, though under one Government and belonging to the same religion or religions, they present several dissimilar features. Equally varied is the life of the different races inhabiting this country, and though in some cases far-fetched, Mr. Gait has been able to make out a good many of points of dissimilarity in the social life of the different communities in India. But these, every one must admit, are disappearing day by day. The growth of the provincial and the National atmosphere, though checked now and then by racial differences of a serious nature, is sure to extinguish them in the long run. I, therefore, offer no apology for taking up the provincial figures first, reserving the question of the relative increase in the followers of the different religions or communities to a later chapter.

The population of this country has increased during the last forty years by nearly 25 per cent. In 1872,

the whole of British India together with the Indian States contained 206 millions of people, but that figure did not include the population of Upper Burma and several other small bits of territory which were annexed to the British Dominions since that date. Several of the Indian States too began to take census only from 1881 and, if all these additions subsequent to 1872 are taken into consideration, the past 40 years give an increase of only 55 millions. Confining our attention only to British India, the following table indicates the variation in the population of the different provinces.

	Population in 1911 in millions	p. c. of increase in 1901-1911	p. c. of increase in 1872-1911
Madras	41·4	8·3	32
Bengal	45·4	7·9	33
Bombay	19·6	6·3	20
Panjab	19·9	—1·7	26
United Provinces ...	47·1	—1·1	12
Central Provinces ...	13·9	16·3	40
Burma	12·1	16·0	...
Behar and Orissa ...	34·4	3·8	31

The exact increase in the population of Burma since 1872 cannot be estimated with any exactness, since at every subsequent census more ground was covered, in addition to the large addition of population as a result of the annexation of Upper Burma in 1884. The figures relating to the other provinces are satisfactorily accurate. Those for the Panjab and the United Provinces are noteworthy. Both of

them showed a marked decrease in the last decade, and it is ascribed chiefly to the havoc worked by epidemics, specially plague. In the decade 1881-1891, the United Provinces increased their population by 2·7 millions, but in the next, the most disastrous since 1872, there was a rapid fall to 786,765. The authorities surmised that this low increase could not have been due to any cause other than the prevalence of famine, but the next decade has proved the inaccuracy of that supposition. With regard to the remaining provinces, there is nothing noteworthy, except that Bombay and the Central Provinces have more than recuperated their decrease in population revealed in the 1901 census.

I do not think that in some of the major provinces there is any likelihood of a rapid increase in the population, nor is it to be wished for under existing circumstances. A vast percentage of the people of India depend on the land, and already in some parts one square mile has to support not less than a thousand inhabitants, while in the West the average is only 250. In many of the provinces even the net cultivable waste is very small, and to bring it under cultivation the ignorant Indian farmer has neither the requisite implements nor the financial resources. The only provinces that can maintain a larger population are Burma, the Central Provinces, and some parts of Madras and Bombay. But, even here, the prospects are not so good as might be expected from the large percentage of cultivable waste. Burma is yet to be opened up for development, and the

Central Provinces are in no way more favourably situated for private enterprise ; and in the case of the other two provinces, the wastes require an abundant supply of water to bring them under cultivation.

If a district is taken as a unit, the highest density of population is to be found in the districts of Howrah and the 24 Parganas. The former has 1850 persons per sq. mile, and even excluding the city of Howrah as many as 1523. Though the mean density in the latter is only 777, in some of the sub-divisions it rises as high as 1500. As I have already indicated, in India the density of population depends mainly on the fertility of the land and the average rainfall. In countries noted for their industries, the centres of manufacturing activity contain, very often, nearly thrice the density of the most fertile agricultural district, but it is yet too early to expect any such conditions here. The following table shows the relation between the density of a place, its rainfall, the percentage of cultivated area and cultivable waste.

	Density	Rainfall	Cultivated	Cultivable
Madras	291	43	38	20
Bombay	145	46	38	25
Bengal	551	70	50	20
United Provinces	427	42	53	19
Central „ ...	122	48	39	26
Burma	53	95	13	29
Panjab	177	31	33	24
Behar and Orissa	344	53	52	21

It should not, however, be supposed that the higher the rainfall, the denser the population. In fact, a

minute examination of the figures recorded in the Census Report demonstrates that, after a certain limit, the density is in inverse ratio to the increase in the rainfall. To give one typical instance; some parts of Assam get nearly three times as much rain as Gujarat, and yet the latter is twice as densely populated. Given a fertile soil, the population is densest where the rainfall ranges between 40 and 60 inches. The only other important factor that contributes to the density of population in India is the healthiness of the locality; but its influence does not make itself so perceptibly felt as one might expect. Certain parts of Northern India have become quite unhealthy of late years, but so conservative are the people that they will not abandon their native village even though their very lives might be threatened. The population of the United Provinces, the Panjab, and certain districts in East Bengal is decreasing mainly on account of the unhealthy nature of the locality, but there is very little trace of any migration to safer parts. Mr. Gait suggests one more factor governing the density of any district in India. He argues that the Zemindary tracts should be more thinly populated than the Ryotwary, because the latter, he thinks, can maintain a larger number of people. His conclusion is evidently based on the supposition that the Zemindars of India are so rapacious that their tenants are left too small a margin for subsistence. But happily, Mr. Gait has to confess the untenability of his conclusions. Figures have got an awkward tendency to bring home unpleasant truths in a most forcible

manner, and a comparison of the density of Zemindary and Ryotwary parts of the country leads Mr. Gait to quite the opposite inference. Unfortunately he does not proceed to discuss the question any further. If he had, he would perhaps have discovered one more surprising fact, *viz.*, whereas most of the produce of Zemindary areas remains, or is expended, within the districts themselves, a larger portion of the income passes, in the case of Ryotwary lands, out of their limits in the form of revenue and is spent mostly in towns and cities. Anyhow, the influence of the system of land tax, or of the most adverse sanitary conditions is very insignificant on this question of density, when compared with the first two factors, the fertility of the soil and the adequacy of the rainfall. Even a most unhealthy locality, provided it yields a good return to his industry, proves, at present, too tempting to the poor and home-loving Indian farmer, and he will stick to it in spite of weekly malarial attacks.

CHAPTER III

THE DECREASE IN THE RELATIVE STRENGTH OF THE HINDUS

An analysis of the population of this country according to their religious beliefs reveals somewhat startling résults compared with the corresponding figures during the previous decades. There is no doubt a gradual increase among the followers of all religions except the Jains, who unfortunately are fast decreasing during the past two decades. The difference in the rate of increase among the other communities is not, so far as the Census Report indicates, accounted for by any conversions, or such other material phenomena. The gravity of the situation among the Hindus becomes clear in the light of this table:

	Actual number in 1911 in millions.	Variation per cent.		
		1901-11	1891-01	1881-1911
Hindus	217·5	5·0	—·3	15·3
Muslims	66·6	6·7	8·9	33·0
Christians	3·8	32·6	28·0	108·1

Thus the Hindus are increasing half as slowly as the Muslims; there can, however, be no comparison with the rate of increase among Christians, because, as will be seen from the next two chapters, it is impossible to ascertain the number that were converted from other faiths. The low rate of increase among the Hindus becomes plainer from the fact that whereas in 1881, 7,432 of every 10,000 of the Indians belonged to that religion, the corresponding figure in 1911 was only 6,939. Before examining the causes that might have contributed to this unhappy situation, I think the following table showing the decrease in their relative strength in the different provinces may be found instructive.

	1881	1901	1911	Decrease in 30 years.
Bengal ...	48·5	46·6	44·8	—3·75
Behar and Orissa ...	84·3	83·3	82·2	—2·07
Bombay ...	74·8	76·5	75·8	+1·05
Central Provinces ...	82·6	83·2	82·6	— ·05
Madras ...	91·4	89·1	88·8	—2·52
Panjab ...	41·3	38·7	32·9	—8·33
United Provinces ...	86·2	85·3	85·0	—1·22
British India ...	71·9	68·3	66·8	—5·09

The figures with respect to the Panjab are a little misleading, inasmuch as many of the Sikhs were returned as Hindus even during the 1901 Census. But after making full allowance for this mistake, the decrease in the relative strength of the Hindus in that province during the last thirty years may be roughly taken at 4 per cent., a higher figure than in the

case of any other. The only two provinces where the Hindus have been satisfactorily increasing are Bombay and the Central Provinces, which, as we shall see later on, are free from the activities of any strong proselytising agency.

Mr. Gait suggests two factors as having contributed to this unhappy situation; firstly, conversion from its ranks to Christianity and, to a smaller degree, to Muhammadanism, and secondly, to the Hindu social customs which discourage a rapid increase. Considering that the Christians still number less than 4 millions, and have increased during the last thirty years by only 108 per cent., and also that the conversions to Muhammadanism are very rare at present, the total loss to the Hindu faith from this cause cannot have exceeded two millions, at the highest. The net loss is even much less, since at every Census a large number of animists return themselves as Hindus. Thus the only factor contributing to this decreasing strength is to be sought for in our social customs, especially those from which our Muslim countrymen are free.

The chief of these is the system of early marriage and the consequent system of widowhood. An appreciable percentage of girls lose their husbands in India before they are even 15 years of age, and since widow remarriage is prohibited in almost all sections of the Hindus, this large number of women do not contribute to the increase of population. The number of these unfortunate human beings goes on increasing as the age-limit is raised. In India, the childbearing

age is between 15 and 35, and the widows of less than 25 years of age may be taken as only half productive. Another effect of the system of early marriage on the productivity of the Hindu races is to be sought for in the high rate of infant mortality which is partly due to the young age of the mothers. The children born to girls of less than 16 years mostly pass away in their infancy, and this unhappy incident has a very marked effect also on the higher limit of their productivity, since these unfortunate girls get prematurely old at 35 or 40. The moral of all these facts is plain. The Hindus are not yet a dying race, but surely they are on that track. Fortunately, its causes are perfectly plain. They have to thank their own social customs, which, as we shall see later on, are ruining them in several other ways too. In spite of Muslim rule for over a thousand years, the Hindus formed 80 per cent. of the population of this country in 1870, but now they are not even 70, and the decimation comes this time from within and not from without—surely a harder foe to combat. The momentous question is: Are we to remain indifferent in the face of this crisis?

CHAPTER IV

THE INCREASE AMONG CHRISTIANS

It will have been seen from the last chapter that whereas the Hindus increased by only 15 per cent. during the last thirty years, the total number of Christians is now twice as large as in 1881. And if we go to the previous Census, they will be found to have trebled themselves in 40 years. These figures, though revealing a startling state of affairs, are not so disheartening as the enemies of the two Indian religions would have us believe. In spite of this increase, the converts are still below four millions and, as will be seen from the next article, there will not be much difficulty in reclaiming most of them, if the Hindu and Muslim organisations should undertake that task. Most of these deserters are Christians only in name; they are Hindus or Muslims in every mode of life, and retain such unchristian forms as the caste system. When the national institutions like the Arya Samaj expand their activities, not only will the Missionaries find little scope for mischief, but they will even have to fight hard to maintain the ground they have already won. But before entering into that fascinating

discussion, I think a knowledge of the distribution of the Christian population in the different provinces may be found instructive.

	Population in 1911	Increase in thousands 1901-11	1891-01	1881-91
Bengal ...	129,746	23	24	10
Behar and Orissa	268,285	96	62	55
Bombay ...	245,657	25	50	25
Burma ...	210,081	63	27	36
Central Provinces	73,401	46	13	1
Madras ...	1,208,511	170	159	168
Panjab ...	199,751	133	18	20
United Provinces	179,694	77	44	11
British India ...	2,603,026	668	419	341

Thus the only province which has been able to keep itself somewhat free from Missionaries is Bengal. Of the 129,000 Christians in that province, 46,000 are Europeans and Eurasians. It is also worthy of note that the Indian States have been safer in this respect than the British territories. The increase during the last thirty years among Christians in the latter is only 85 per cent., whereas in British India it is 121 per cent. And if we exclude Travancore and Cochin, the remaining Indian States do not contain even 120,000 converts.

The above table shows that the success of the Missionaries has been most marked in 'benighted' Madras. This can be no cause for wonder, since the Madrasi has always shown a strange fascination for the foreigner. The more enlightened classes of Hindus are perhaps nowhere else in India so orthodox in their

ways of life, but that has scarcely stood in the way of the Missionaries. The converts are chiefly Roman Catholics, in which fold are found three-fifths of the total number of Christians. In my next article, I shall have occasion to discuss the methods by which they were and are secured all over India, and also the reasons which induce them to forsake the religion of their fathers. I may, however, point out in the meanwhile that the orthodoxy of the upper classes, which has kept its members quite safe from the Missionaries, is also, to a large extent, responsible for the loss of the lowest classes to the Hindu religion. The only other provinces where the Missionaries have achieved remarkable success during the last decade are the Panjab, the United Provinces, and Behar and Orissa. The strength of the Missionaries in the first two of these has been somewhat notorious, especially to the student of politics. The Arya Samaj, one of their strongest opponents, owes much of its recent troubles to the influence of the latter, and their jubilation at the deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai in 1907 is, to say the least, most suspicious. In the new province of Behar and Orissa, nearly the whole of the increase is confined to the Chota Nagpur plateaux, where an addition of 92,000 has been registered. Nearly nine-tenths of these belong to the aboriginal tribes of Oraon, Munda, Kana and Santal.

It is not possible here to go into the achievements of the different Missions in the different provinces, but the following analysis, referring to the whole country, throws some light on their activities.

	Population in 1911 in thousands	Increase in 1901-11 in thousands
Anglican ...	525	71
Baptist ...	337	116
Congregationalist ...	135	97
Lutheran ...	218	63
Methodist ...	171	94
Presbyterian ...	181	127
Roman Catholic ...	1,490	288
Salvationist ...	52	33
Syrian ...	727	156

Leaving aside the Roman Catholics and the Syrians, in whom the increase is more natural than artificial, the success has been quite uniform except in the case of the Anglicans, the low rate of increase among whom is perhaps to be sought for in the State-aid they receive. The workers in the other Missions can expect no assistance from the Government treasury, and even in 'spiritual' matters like these, one would be surprised if money is not doled out according to the number of conversions. This may, however, be an incorrect view of the situation. I must confess, in justice to the Missions, that I am quite ignorant of the methods by which they distribute the financial rewards to their agents in India, and the reader will therefore pardon me if I pass on to that most interesting subject, "the truth about conversions".

CHAPTER V

THE TRUTH ABOUT CONVERSIONS

It is most refreshing to find the Missionaries coming forward to speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth about conversions. Seldom have I come across any Missionary writings where this is so plainly expressed as in some passages of the Census of India for 1911. Needless to say, the Missionary version of every case of baptism is that the convert was disgusted with his own religion and came over to the foreign faith because of inward conviction. Even the consciousness that the hearer knows the exact percentage of veracity in it rarely deters the preacher of the Gospel from making that assertion. Few of his brethren will agree with one in the obvious fact that a Pariah returns himself a Christian only from purely selfish motives regarding the improvement of his social status, and that many of the converts do not know even the rudiments of Christianity. The Missionaries will tell you that they never act upon the principle that the end justifies the means, and quite often have I heard them proclaim that their converts give up drinking from the day

of their baptism; when the fact is that in most cases the vice dates from that memorable occasion.

The Missionary who supplied the interesting information to Mr. Gait is, fortunately, a believer in the utility of plain speaking. He has not hesitated to speak the truth, even where it could not but pain a very vast majority of his brethren in and outside India. The Roman Catholic Missionary writes to Mr. Gait: "Personally I know of some cases where individuals came over from religious motives. But *these cases are rare.*" The italics are, of course, mine, but how pregnant are those words! The same person says:

> For a long time, Christian influence was practically non-existent. It would be a stupendous wonder if masses of aborigines, so limited in intellectual capacity and so indifferent to our teaching in itself, had suddenly risen to a higher standard of morality.

This is exactly what happens, but do our missionaries admit it? They will tell you, on the contrary, that the converts became Christians first in spirit and then in flesh. It is certainly strange that such preposterous statements should be made regarding their religious convictions when whole villages return themselves as Christians. What happens in reality is that the leading men are patiently influenced—by every possible means, but seldom spiritual—to advise their followers to give up their ancient religion, and it often takes generations before the converts get any idea of the religion to which, possibly, their ancestors committed them. As was evident from the last chapter, the bulk of the converts

in India are Roman Catholics, and here is a paragraph from the Census Report detailing their methods of conversion :

> The Roman Catholic Missionaries admittedly do not interfere with caste distinctions. They object only to those caste customs which are distinctly idolatrous, and the converts conform to most of their caste customs and often claim to belong to their caste. The conditions exacted from a proselyte before baptism are probably not so exacting in this sect as in some others and a public profession of faith is not required.

These statements throw a flood of light on the nature of proselytising work that is carried on in India. I do not intend to go any further into this sickening tale, sickening from the point of view of the Missionaries as well as the people of this country. It is not for us to advise the people, who come to this country to secure us spiritual salvation, but it is most humiliating that we should afford scope for their existence in our midst.

When we pass on to consider the causes that aid proselytism, the most outstanding is easily found to be the treatment which the depressed classes receive at the hands of the other people of India. A member of the 'Untouchable' caste has only to be informed of the material advantages of giving up the faith of his ancestors, and he not only readily consents to be called a Christian but also to aid in the conversion of his relatives and neighbours. If we go deeper into the question, it will be soon found that the immediate causes of Missionary success are most regrettable. As the Roman Catholic priest points out,

very often the innocent members of any village are returned as Christians, when none but their panchayats are cognisant of any such transformation in their status. Another noteworthy factor contributing to his success is oppression by the police or the Zemindars. The Pariah who throws himself on the mercy of the Missionary is free from these petty tyrannies during the rest of his life. The police-constable is fully aware that the head of the Mission has great influence with the Government Officers, often with the Superintendent of Police himself, and the Zemindar too, scrupulously avoids giving the Missionaries any chance by which they can unfold to his neighbours any of his unseemly actions. The third factor is the bait, I cannot call it by any other name, that is thrown to the wretched in the form of medical or financial assistance. The free hospitals which our missionary friends are maintaining in India are generally viewed with much distrust by even the suffering neighbours, and their misgivings are, as every newspaper reader knows, well-founded. I am aware of a few instances where the intending converts were allured by the prospect of the immediate settlement of all their debts, but these rare cases refer only to members of the higher castes which have safely withstood Missionary attacks. Innumerable minor causes also contribute to the success of proselytism in India. The fascination of a new faith, the desire to have matrimonial connections with any Christian family, the misrepresentation of the innocent victim's own faith—these and many other transitory influences often lead

the wavering temperament of many weak-minded persons to give up their old faith, about whose greatness they are mostly ignorant.

It will be thus seen that the increase in the number of Christians is, in a vast majority of cases, no more than nominal. The converts consent to change their faith on grounds which have not even the remotest connection with any religion—Hinduism or Christianity. The question, how far the Missionaries were justified in taking advantage of such conditions in reporting the increase among their fold to the head-quarters in the West, is certainly most interesting and instructive, but any exhaustive discussion is beyond the scope of the present article. I am free to confess at the very outset that there have been cases where the change of religion was quite justifiable, but, as has already been pointed out, such cases are very rare, if not comparatively insignificant. In almost all cases, the converts have merely exchanged their religion for material advantages, or in other words, the Missionaries who kindly came to their assistance in times of need seldom failed to exact their pound of flesh in the garb of spiritual salvation. My study of the different religions is extremely meagre, and I cannot venture any opinion on this momentous question of salvation; but that need not prevent me, or any ignorant Indian like myself, from asking the Missionaries whether they would not have done better if they had not taken advantage of material sufferings to force spiritual salvation on the converts? And it is equally unintelligible to me

how they can justify their utilisation of the protection from police or Zemindary trouble to compel them—not of course by physical means such as flogging or solitary confinement—to embrace Christianity.

These are some of the most painful episodes of Missionary activity in India, and plain speaking is very likely to be misunderstood. I shall therefore, I hope, be pardoned if I add a word of explanation. Though my foregoing observations may suggest a different interpretation of my views, I may assure the reader that I am most grateful to the Missionaries for some of their activities in India. The splendid work which the Salvation Army is doing in the midst of criminals and criminal tribes cannot fail to evoke feelings of gratefulness from any Indian. Equal, if not greater, is our gratitude for the useful educational institutions which the Missions have established in India. They have played a very conspicuous part in disseminating higher as well as elementary education. But all the same, the Missions cannot expect us to tolerate everything concerning them. The scripture class in their Colleges, where, according to the words of a former Director of Public Instruction in Madras, the non-Christian students are trained into devout hypocrites, the unjustifiable advantage which they take of the material sufferings of any wretched Indians to force Christianity on them, and the systematic misrepresentation of the Indian religions, in and outside this country, and to people who are quite ignorant of their teachings—all these are phases of Missionary activities

which no self-respecting Indian can tolerate. It is true that attention is seldom drawn to them by eminent Indians; but with due deference to them, I venture to point out that they are thereby rendering an ill service both to this country and to the Missions themselves.

CHAPTER VI

THE DESERTION OF INDIAN VILLAGES

The statement that the Indian villages are rapidly becoming depopulated is most misleading, at least when one considers the general interpretation suggested by our knowledge of western conditions. The report on the Census of India contains complete evidence to prove that the rural population of India is not decreasing in number. On the other hand, the Indian towns have increased their population during the last 30 years by only 24·3 per cent. while the corresponding figure in the case of the whole country is not less. And during the last decade there has actually been a fall in the proportion of urban population from 9·9 to 9·5 per cent. This decrease is perhaps only apparent, since some of the towns are reported to have been suffering severely from plague when the Census was taken. Anyhow, there is no evidence to suggest that the Indian village, by which is meant any locality with less than 5,000 inhabitants, is being deserted by the people.

If we examine the causes that contribute to the growth of towns and to the consequent depopulation

of country parts, it will be found that most of them are non-existent in India. Though a few industries have grown up here and there, the percentage of the total population depending upon agriculture for their livelihood has remained unchanged during the last two decades. This is one other fact supporting the conclusion arrived at already. I am, however, aware of the argument that the people dependent on land need not necessarily live in the villages, and as a matter of fact, the existence of a vast number of 'absentee landlords' is notorious in India; but this is no new feature of Indian life; at least the change that is perceptible in this respect is not very appreciable. Even in the seventies and eighties of the last century, landlords are known to have been living in towns, and even to-day a vast number of them, especially non-brahmana, are content with the plainer life of the village, though there is evidence to show that these also are being steadily lured away by the amenities of town life; but any loss sustained in this way is more than made up by the higher birth-rate in our villages.

If, however, by the depopulation of villages is meant their desertion by the able-bodied and the middle-class people, there is a good deal of truth in the popular inference. The more ambitious of the Indian villagers are now seeking to better their prospects in adjacent towns, and it is a matter of common knowledge that the villages of to-day are far inferior in intellect to those of the middle of the nineteenth century. This is specially the case with the larger

villages which are enjoying the blessings of education. The younger members of the village nobility find little scope for the activities which marked the life of their predecessors, and the struggle for existence drives them to the towns and cities, where, in changed surroundings, they can earn their livelihood in several ways which are not open to them in their native villages. Similar is the case with a large number of their able-bodied labourers. Though labour is becoming dearer in towns, its supply is plentiful in the villages, and consequently, the rise in wages has not there kept pace with the increase in the price of food-stuffs. The effect of this situation is to induce the more courageous and able-bodied of the labourers to seek their fortune in the neighbouring towns, where, thanks to the high rate of mortality, the supply of labour does not exceed the demand. Thus the depopulation of the villages, so far as the best elements of its society are concerned, is undoubted, and in some respects, the problems which this desertion presents are far more acute than if migration had spread itself to all classes of people.

There is a striking variation in the percentage of people that prefer country life in the different provinces, as can be seen from the following table:

Province	Residents in Towns	Residents in Villages	Average population per village
Bengal	6·5	93·5	355
Behar and Orissa ...	3·7	96·3	379
Bombay	19·0	81·0	612
Burma	9·3	90·7	292

Central Provinces	8·5	91·5	327
Madras ...	11·8	88·2	678
Panjab ...	11·9	88·1	531
United Provinces	10·2	89·8	400
British India ...	9·3	90·7	412

Thus Bombay has the highest percentage of town dwellers in India. To a large extent, this distribution of population is largely dependent on the number of towns in the province, whose existence, as we shall see in the next article, depends on various causes more or less peculiar to India. It will also be seen from the above table that there is very little connection between the percentage of village dwellers and its average population. Madras, the Panjab and the United Provinces have almost the same percentage of the former, but there is a great disparity in the average population. This difference becomes more noteworthy when we remind ourselves that the United Provinces have a population of 47 millions while the other two have only 41 and 19 each. Yet the first has the smallest number of people in every village. Though this strangeness is to be partly sought for in the meaning which the census officers of the different provinces attached to the term "village," yet these comparisons bring out in a striking manner the tendency of the people to live in large or small groups. This opens up a question of absorbing interest to a student of sociology, but my knowledge of the conditions prevailing in Northern India is too meagre to carry me any further.

CHAPTER VII

CITIES AND TOWNS IN INDIA

Considering the population and the area of this country, the presence of only 30 cities with a population of 100,000 and more is unique. The average density of population is higher in India than in most of the well-known countries of the world, but the people seldom live in congregations numbering more than two thousand. Various causes contribute to the smallness of this figure. A large percentage of the population being still actively engaged in agriculture, the most advantageous arrangement of locating their dwellings is to cluster in small groups with fields and gardens at the outer fringe all around. The chief distributive and collecting centres amidst these, where the people of the surrounding villages carry on their petty commercial transactions, develop into more ponderous units comprising in some instances two or more small villages closely united together. Where these natural centres of business life coincide with the headquarters of divisional officers, the population often rises rapidly above 5,000, and if in addition to these attractions, the locality happens to contain a famous temple or to be on the railway line whence trade routes branch off to lesser towns, it soon qualifies itself for the rank of a city in the eyes of the Provincial Census Superintendents, who, perhaps,

discouraged by the scarcity of towns with a lakh of inhabitants, have been gracious enough in some provinces to cut down that figure by fifty per cent. These are the main causes that contribute generally to the growth of towns in India. If to them, we add the growth of Industries on modern lines, whose influence, as we shall presently see, is very insignificant at present, the list becomes quite exhaustive. I shall perhaps be told that it is still defective, inasmuch as it does not take note of those towns which owe their importance to handicrafts. Yes, they are known to us, outsiders, by their handicrafts, but if we take stock of the different causes that tended to the formation of such centres, it will be seen that the handicrafts played, or play, the least significant part. The bulk of the population is attracted to them by other inducements, such as the presence of Government Offices including the Military, the briskness of commercial life, or the fame of their temples. The influence of temples in aiding the growth of towns is more peculiar and forcible in India than in any other country. Not only do they maintain a large establishment, but also aid the development of trade by attracting a large number of pilgrims.

A perusal of the causes that are known to have helped the growth of the 30 cities we have in India, or their decline in some cases, elucidate most remarkably the above analysis. Twenty-two of them are cantonments and their strength is, without doubt, due to a large extent to that transitory influence. Twelve of them are also the Capitals of the Provincial

Governments or the Indian States. The rest owe their importance to such varying causes as commerce, being centres of pilgrimage, or the location of district offices and famous educational institutions. How far these causes contribute to the formation of cities can be gleaned from the fall of population in some others. Mandalay, once the famous Capital of Upper Burma has now lost all its former attractions, and, in spite of its being a cantonment, has declined in population by 27 per cent. during the last twenty years. Even Capitals of Indian States like Baroda and Jaipur are losing their population, as a result of the happy change that is perceivable in the ideals of their Rulers. The decline of Patna, the Capital of the new province, forcibly illustrates the influence of railways in diverting or even ruining the older centres or channels of trade.

Two marked features of the progress of any town or city are the low percentage of women, and the higher percentage of foreign-born persons, as the following table illustrates :

	Females per 1000 males.	Percentage of foreign-born.	Percentage of Increase in population 1891-1911
Calcutta ...	495	70·2	34·2
Bombay ...	530	80·4	20·2
Rangoon ...	409	58·3	53·3
Karachi ...	683	59·2	41·1
Mandalay ...	984	9·3	—27·2
Patna ...	922	9·8	—17·4

In a city which is daily increasing its population, the immigration of males always preponderates. The females generally come after the former settle themselves permanently in the cities and, in the case of the poor, the males often remain single to the end of their life. The percentage of foreign-born people is naturally very great in the progressive cities. Firstly the increase in the population is seldom natural, if at all it is possible. The death-rate in our towns and cities is often higher than the birth-rate and since the percentage of women too is very low, the natural increase among the permanent residents cannot be high. These facts are strengthened by the figures relating to Mandalay and Patna, the two declining cities. In Mandalay, the percentage of women is higher than in the case of the whole province of Burma, and is no doubt due, to some extent, to the migration of the able-bodied males to surrounding places in search of employment. The only cities that form the exceptions to these tests are Madura and Trichinopoly. They contain a very small proportion of foreign-born people, 15 and 19 per cent. each and contain 999 and 1,006 females for every 1,000 males. This is due, no doubt, to the nature of the causes that aided the development of these cities. They contain no large industries which encourage the immigration of male labourers from the surroundings and the people that are attracted to them—small though their percentage is—come with the intention of permanently settling there.

An analysis of the percentages of town-dwellers belonging to each of the main religions of India gives interesting results. 86·5 per cent. of the total number of Parsis in this country reside in towns, and among other communities, the Jains and the Christians have 29·6 and 21·3 of their co-religionists in our towns and cities. Next come the Muslims with 12·3 per cent. and Hindus are seen lowest in the table with only 8·8 per cent. These figures, however, show very striking variations in the different provinces:

Provinces	All Religions	Hindu	Muslim	Jain
Bengal ...	6·5	9·7	3·7	59·2
Behar ...	3·7	3·4	8·0	37 8
Bombay ...	19·0	17·3	21·1	36·9
Burma ...	9·3	53·3	35·2	86·1
Central Provinces ...	8·5	7·9	37·9	25·5
Madras ...	11·8	10·8	24·6	10·6
Panjab ...	11·1	13·5	10·4	53·3
United Provinces ...	10·2	7·2	26·9	39·7

The Parsis have not been included in the list because nowhere in India do less than 75 per cent. of them live in towns. And as to the Christians, any facts concerning them lose most of their value when we remind ourselves that their existence in rural or urban parts depends exclusively on the localities over which the Missions spread their nets of "Salvation". Regarding the followers of other religions, the table is instructive. First, the Jains prefer town life to a noteworthy extent in all provinces except Madras and the Central

Provinces, which contain a large percentage of them. Secondly, the proportion of Muhammadans living in towns is lower than the average urban population of all religions only in those provinces in which they preponderate over others, as is plain from figures relating to Bengal and the Panjab where they form 52 and 54 per cent. of the total population. Thirdly, the Hindus are most conservative as to village life except in Burma, where they are mostly foreigners and thus naturally live in towns. All these inferences illustrate the identical proposition that the percentage of town-dwellers among any class of people varies inversely as their numerical strength in any province. This is easily explicable. When the followers of any religion are small in number compared with the "heathen," they find it more comfortable to live in towns where religious differences are not so strong as in the villages; this principle does not, it is true, hold good in the case of Christians, but, as I have already pointed out, their choice of habitation is purely artificial, and consequently cannot be expected to be governed by any rule which holds good only in normal conditions.

CHAPTER VIII

HOUSES AND FAMILIES IN INDIA

The vague notion prevailing in the country regarding the growing tendency of the joint families towards disintegration finds very little support in the census figures. To a superficial reader, they might seem conclusive, since he will note that the average population per house has decreased from 5·8 in 1881 to 4·9 in 1911. But this decrease will be found on a closer consideration to be due to several other causes of whose existence we are convinced. The decrease of population during the last two decades in several portions of Northern India could not but have resulted in lessening the number of individuals in every family. A reduction in the average population per house, which is for census purposes taken as denoting no more than the residence of a family, is markedly noticeable only in the United Provinces and the Panjab, the two localities which have most suffered in population during the last two decades. Again, the above figures are misleading, since the definition of a house underwent a somewhat radical change in a few provinces since the first census was taken. A

house is defined in some of them on the structural basis, i.e., "as the residence of one or more families having a separate independent entrance from the common way," and in some others, from the social standpoint, "as the home of a commensal family with its dependants and servants". The change from the former to the latter naturally decreases the average population per house, and this is clearly visible in the Panjab figures where the transformation took place at the last census. A third phenomenon that warns us against the popular assumption is the constancy of the comparative figures for Madras and Bengal, where the system of enumeration has remained unchanged. In Madras, the average population per house has remained constant at 5·3 since 1891, and in Bengal there is even a slight increase from 5·2 to 5·3. It is, however, not contended here that the joint-family system is not losing its attractions. A tendency towards disintegration is certainly visible, but, like the cry of rural depopulation, the popular idea regarding it is too exaggerated, if not also misleading. It is quite easy to enumerate a number of causes that work for the passing away of the joint family, but few pause to consider how far they are successful and in what way they work. The picture of the wives of brothers falling out in every activity of the family, and the jealousy with which the brothers themselves look at each other's earnings no doubt reflect the existing state of affairs in some instances, but we are apt to forget in estimating their result that they existed also in the generations that have passed

away. Lest, however, any inferences should be mistaken, I give below the figures from which the reader can draw his own conclusions:

Provinces	Average number of persons per house		
	1891	1901	1911
Bengal ...	5·2	5·2	5·3
Behar ...	5·7	5·3	5·2
Bombay ...	5·4	5·1	4·9
Burma ...	5·3	5·0	4.9
Central Provinces ...	5·0	4·8	4·9
Madras ...	5·3	5·4	5·3
Panjab ...	6·6	6·2	4·5
United Provinces ...	5·7	5·5	4·6

The above table also reveals that though India is generally spoken of as noted for its joint families, the average population per house or family is very low, in fact, it is the same as in Great Britain. Joint families are restricted in India only to some of the higher castes of Hindus. Muhammadans do not have them, nor do most of the non-Brahmanas, not to speak of the depressed classes. We have in this country 64·7 million married females aged 15 and over, and the number of houses is 63·7 million showing thereby that each commensal family generally has its separate home.

The average number of houses per square mile is now 35·8 against 31·6 in 1901. Ten years earlier it was 33·9; thus the net increase during the last 20

years is not great, though it has kept pace with the growth of population. This number varies appreciably in the different provinces and is naturally related to the density of population per square mile.

Province	Average No. of Houses	Average Density
Bengal	104.5	578
Behar	66·5	415
Bombay	29·5	160
Burma	10·7	52
Central Provinces...	24·8	139
Madras	55·0	291
Panjab	39·6	200
United Provinces ...	92·3	440

These figures cannot, however, be utilised as a basis for any conclusions. The increase of the number of houses per square mile is no sure sign of the resources of the people of any province. A more reliable indication is the nature of the houses themselves. And unfortunately on this point, the census report has no reliable information. We are of course assured in some of the provincial reports that the material prosperity of the people has vastly increased during the decade; but the assertion, though accompanied by equally vague generalisations, is of no importance to the reader on account of the absence of any data on which the writer might have based his inference. Moreover, the observations of the Census Superintendents are mostly confined to the cities and towns,

which show somewhat marvellous development here and there, but the material well-being of 9·5 per cent. of the total population of the country does not guarantee the prosperity of the rest. In fact, the contention of Indian publicists is that the increasing poverty of the country is visible only in the villages, where the prevailing opinion is certainly in its favour.

CHAPTER IX

INDIANS IN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE COLONIES

The existence of more than half a million Indians in Great Britain and the Colonies who were not born in India represents one of the most striking aspects of emigration from this country. The Census of the British Empire taken in 1911 revealed the presence of 1·56 million Indians in the Colonies, and of them only a million were born in India; and though all of them still claim this country as their motherland, not only have they or their children forgotten the Indian vernaculars, but they are also known to have even given up their former mode of living. A vast majority of them are no doubt labourers, mainly under indenture, but the number of free Indians of a higher status is rapidly increasing. Some of these Colonies are said to present the appearance of an Indian town with Indian traders, shopkeepers, and customers, and this is evident in many cases from the lessening numerical difference between the two sexes. Leaving aside the Asiatic Colonies, to most of which Indians migrate only for a period of years, the

following table will show their strength in thousands, in some of the important Colonies :

	Total No. of Indians	Males	Females	Total Born in India
South African Union ...	150	94·6	55·7	85
Mauritius ...	258	139	118·9	35
Trinidad ...	107	...	...	50
Jamaica ...	17	10	7·4	7·7
British Guiana ...	126	73	53	88
Fiji Islands ...	39·9	25·8	14	28·9
Total for British Empire	1,564	893	552	1023

The numbers of females and males in Trinidad have not been indicated in the Census returns, but since less than half the number of Indians now to be found in the Colony were born in this country, there is not likely to be any great disparity between the two sexes. The figures for some of the remaining important Colonies, which are now straining every nerve to keep off the Indians or to deny them the full privileges of citizens of the British Empire, are not given in the above table because of the obviously untrustworthy appearance of the returns. For instance, the total number of Indians in Canada is given as 2,342, which figure is also repeated in the column showing those among them who were born in this country. A similar mistake vitiates the figures for Uganda, another British Colony, where the position of Indians

is getting intolerable day by day. The returns reveal the existence of only 1,687 Indians there, while from independent sources we know their number to be far greater both in Uganda and in the Dominion of Canada.

The Colony that is most popular with the Indian emigrants is Ceylon, which contained 580,076 of them in 1911. Of the remaining Colonies to which Indian coolies migrate temporarily, the Malay States and the Straits Settlements are most noteworthy. The migration of Indians to them is only of very recent origin, but still, they have attracted among themselves 259,000 emigrants, of whom 230,000 were born in this country. This shows that already a large percentage of them are settling themselves permanently in the plantations, which is but natural in view of the comparatively satisfactory treatment that is meted out to them by their employers as well as the Government. Though in point of sanitary surroundings and educational facilities, the new homes of these emigrants are in no way superior to their previous ones, yet their high wages and the greater interest which is now being taken in their welfare by their masters induce a good many of them to spend the rest of their lives in these Colonies. This tendency is not visible to the same extent in the case of emigrants to Ceylon. Though that Colony has been enjoying Indian labour for more than half a century, not even 100,000 of the emigrants have permanently settled there. The nearness of their old homes and the ease with which they can return to them—rendered easier still by the opening of the Indo-Ceylon railway connection—greatly tempt these

people to give up their new employment as soon as they make a small saving. In spite of this constant migration, emigrants to Ceylon contain a very satisfactory percentage of females; while in the Straits Settlements and the Malay States, the proportion of males to females among the emigrants is 10 to 3, in Ceylon it is 17 to 12, higher than in the case of every Colony except Mauritius.

Of the different provinces of India, Madras supplies by far the largest number of emigrants. At the recent Census, 693,000 out of the total 1,023,000 returned Madras as their birthplace. Its pre-eminence in this respect becomes plain when it is noted that Bengal, the province supplying the next highest number, has to her credit 32,000 emigrants, and that, as we shall see in the next chapter, Burma attracts a vast number of only Madras coolies to her plantations. Except in the case of the Fiji Islands, victims to which were supplied in larger numbers by the United Provinces, and Mauritius where the Bengalees prevail, the Southern Presidency has proved very profitable to the labour recruiters of the remaining Colonies. A vast majority of the Passive Resisters of South Africa are Tamilians, and the Madrasis have also monopolised labour in the plantations of the Malay States, not to speak of Ceylon, whose proximity to Madras naturally marks it off for the South Indian coolie.

There remains only one other portion of the British Empire to deal with and that is Great Britain. Though the number of Indians resident therein is only 4,143, for reasons quite well known, they form the

most important section of the emigrants to the Empire. As I have already stated, 2,537 of them are engaged in "Transport by water," and, needless to say, are employed mainly as menials, such as sailors, cooks and stewards on board the ships. Of the rest, 60 are engaged in "trades," many of whom are possibly student apprentices. Another set, of whom 27 are females are reported as living principally on their own income. The Indian domestic servants, who sometimes go to England in the service of their former masters, number only 70. Though there are reasons to expect a large increase in their number since the last Census was taken, in March 1911, there were only 1,083 students in Great Britain and 29 of them were females. A more recent official estimate puts their number at 1,600 and over, and London alone is said to contain from 800 to 900 of them. Edinburgh comes next with 230, Cambridge with 117, Oxford 66, Glasgow 60, and Manchester 50, while there are smaller numbers at Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, and other centres.

CHAPTER X

INTERNAL MIGRATION IN INDIA

Not long ago, I came across a village magnate with the income of a first grade Deputy Collector, who confessed to having been unable to visit even once in his life the chief town of his district, which was not more than 20 miles from his residence. He assured me that he had been quite often beyond the limits of his hamlet, though on no occasion was he more than a dozen miles from his home. The annual *jatra* in the neighbouring town has never failed to attract him, but even on such occasions, he liked to return to his village for the night. For a man of his means, such an experience is of course exceptional, but if one should go into the interior of an Indian district, one or two scores of miles away from the railway lines, one hardly meets with many people whose experience is not confined to a radius of not more than a dozen miles. It is not difficult to find one or two persons who, though bowed down with age, have no memories of any sojourns in the nearest town. Fortunately the number of such people is rapidly diminishing, but still very few Indians like the idea of being away from the village of their forefathers. Even among the educated, there is a very

marked dislike to migration, which can be easily traced to the prevailing social customs. To point out only a few: The caste restrictions do not allow an Indian to marry outside his sect. He cannot eat the meals cooked by the member of any other group. If he dies, his obsequies will not be performed without his family or caste priest, who cannot be got in any other district or province, and there is even the probability of his dead body being removed by scavengers. There are, in addition, the economic causes which indirectly hinder the migration of the masses. The main means of livelihood being agriculture, which very often has nowhere better prospects for him than in his own village, there is no inducement to him to give up the home of his fathers. A change is visible in this direction in recent years. There is a constant flow of agricultural people from the congested parts to the localities newly opened up for cultivation by large irrigation schemes, but this movement is confined to only a small portion of the country.

The figures relating to the migration of people from one district to another, as given in the Census Report, are not reliable evidence of that tendency in the country. The person returned at the Census in any district other than that of his birth might have been away on any temporary business, or he might be one of the periodic emigrants who go out in search of more paying employment during certain months of the year. We have then a small number of semi-permanent emigrants who settle in a foreign district or province to earn

their livelihood. Among these, we may class the European settlers, the major part of the army, mill-hands to industrial centres like Bombay or Calcutta, and lastly the notorious Marwari trader and money-lender who, though a native of Rajputana, is ever ready to migrate to any part of the country if a good return is assured. Finally, there are the permanent emigrants, who give up for ever the district of their forefathers in favour of better conveniences in other districts. Of all these four classes, the first is by far the most prominent from the numerical point of view. Of the 26·5 million Indians who were enumerated during the last Census in a district other than that of their birth, 16·5 millions belonged to the adjacent districts, and of these a vast majority are doubtless temporary emigrants. Most of them must have been casual visitors to the houses of their relations who, in the case of villages on the borders of districts, are often bound together by the closest ties. Figures concerning them are the most deceptive, since they cannot be utilised for any purpose.

The most interesting aspect of migration in India is inter-provincial, which is rendered very indefinite by the presence of a large percentage of visitors to places within a few miles of the borderland. Leaving these apart, the large streams of migration from Behar and Orissa, the United Provinces, Rajputana and Madras are specially noteworthy. These provinces supply the requisite labour to the fertile plains of Bengal, and the still undeveloped Assam and Burma. Not only are the fields of Bengal capable of supporting a

larger population than is now to be found in them, but the unsanitary condition of the province aids further immigration by decimating or disabling the existing labourers. Of the 1,400,000 emigrants in Bengal, only a fifth are the natives of the contiguous province of Behar and Orissa or Assam, showing thereby how attractive its factories and lands have been to the residents of even the distant United Provinces and Rajputana. The labourers who are thus secured by Bengal often pass on further west to the tea-plantations of Assam or to the rice-mills of Burma. But the loss on this account is very trifling. The whole tea-garden population of Assam is below 700,000 and in 1911, the number of Bengalee coolies enumerated in Burma amounted to only 135,000. In this latter province, they are being gradually replaced by the Madrasees who now number 248,000, and have increased during the last ten years by nearly 25 per cent. while there was a sharp fall of 16 per cent. among the Bengalees.

Though the Indian States are under different Governments, emigration between them and British territory is very free. The main details of the same are plain from the appended table (unit=1,000).

The net result of this migration is a gain of 135,000 people to British India. The Rajputana Agency is mainly responsible for this result. The States comprising it have given 182,000 people to the Panjab, 118,000 to Bombay, and 113,000 to the United Provinces. British India is, however, not to be congratulated on this balance in its favour; for, the

people that the Rajputana States send out are chiefly the Marwaris, the well-known vampires that live on the misery of their poor and credulous countrymen.

State	British India		Balance
	To	From	
Bengal States ...	37	135	98
Behar States ...	77	309	232
Bombay States ...	582	425	—157
C. I. Agency ...	408	313	—95
C. P. States ...	119	194	75
Hyderabad ...	288	229	—59
Madras States ...	43	128	85
Mysore ...	126	300	174
Panjab States ...	388	422	34
Rajputana ...	595	170	—425
Others ...	391	294	—97
Total ...	3,054	2,919	—135

CHAPTER XI

THE DEARTH OF WOMEN IN INDIA

One of the most interesting chapters in the Census Report deals with the proportion of females to the male population of the country. The Census of 1881 returned 954 females per thousand males, and during the next two decades the percentage rose to 963. It has now fallen again to exactly the same figure as in 1881. There are considerable variations in the figures for the different provinces, some of them even showing a higher percentage of females than males, but as will be seen from the following table, such a normal state of affairs is confined only to Madras, Behar, and the Central Provinces :

Number of Females per 1,000 Males.

Province	1911	1901	1891	1881
Bengal ...	945	960	973	994
Behar ...	1,043	1,047	1,040	1,024
Bombay ...	933	945	938	938
Burma ...	959	962	962	877
Central Provinces	1,008	1,019	985	973
Madras ...	1,032	1,029	1,023	1,021
Punjab ...	817	854	850	844
United Provinces	915	937	930	925
British India ...	954	963	958	954

The proportion, here given, refers only to the actual population of each province, and needless to say, it is slightly different when only the natural population is taken into account. This difference is, however, marked in Burma which contains a very large percentage of immigrants. The percentage of females in the natural population is 102·8, an increase of nearly seven per cent. over the above figures. An exactly opposite state of affairs, is visible in the provinces which supply these emigrants, as will be seen from the following table:

NUMBER OF FEMALES TO 1,000 MALES.

Province	Actual Population	Natural Population
Behar ...	1,043	1,014
United Provinces ...	915	902
Madras ...	1,032	1,011

Returning again to some aspects of the previous table, the most noteworthy feature is the gradual decline in the percentage of females since 1881 in Bengal. From 99·4 it has now come down to 94·5 and the same phenomenon also is observable in the case of the natural population of the province. In 1881 the percentage of females in it was 101·3, but during the next forty years, it has gradually fallen to 970. The Muhammadans, it may be noted, have a higher proportion of females (958), than the Hindus (931), in the province as a whole, and in every natural division. It will have been seen that Bombay has now only 933

females per thousand males. This figure is a little misleading since there is a very remarkable difference in the proportion in the several natural divisions of the province. Sind, which shares the fate of the Panjab in this respect has only 812 females per thousand males, or 834 if emigration be taken into consideration. In the rest of the presidency, the proportion varies from 919 in Gujerat to 996 in the Konkan. A similar variation is also observable in the different parts of the Panjab, the proportion ranging between 795 in the south-eastern part of the province to 901 in the Himalayan region.

The sex proportions for the whole of India differ very greatly from those obtaining in western Europe, where the number of females per thousand males varies from 1,093 in Portugal to 1,003 in Ireland. But this difference is less if the figures for the rest of the world are considered. In the United States, the number is only 943, 979 in Japan, 920 in Ceylon even after excluding emigrants; but if the population of the whole world is taken into account, the proportion in India is perhaps lower than the average since populous China is reported to have a higher ratio; but all the same, very little instruction is possible to be obtained from a rough comparison like this. In the countries of western Europe there is a constant flow of emigrants to the United States and the sparsely habited parts of the world, and consequently a higher ratio of females in the former countries, and the correlated smaller ratio in the case of the United States, Canada or New Zealand is largely governed by this movement. But that

disturbing feature is not so remarkable in the case of India. As will have been observed by the reader, from a previous article, the number of Indians, born in this country and now resident in foreign lands, is no more than a million, of whom a fourth are females.

Whatever may be the causes of this low proportion of females in India, there is no doubt that it has created a very difficult situation in some parts of the country. It is well known that but for this scarcity, there would not have been even half so widespread a traffic in girls as is now known to exist in north-western India. One occasionally hears of the wife of some unsuspecting person being taken to another part of the province and sold there as an unmarried woman. The sale of girls and even of wives is greatly encouraged. Whereas in other parts of India, the girl is sent out of the family at a great expense, in the Panjab girls fetch a good sum to the father or guardian even where they are not intended for immoral purposes. Another natural sequence of this inadequate supply of women is the low position which they occupy in certain castes. The woman that is bought, often with the money of a joint family, is considered more in the light of a financial asset than a wife, and quite often the so-called husband sells her off whenever he feels the burden of supporting her. These practices are of course very rare in the higher castes, where even the system of dowries is said to be very common. A third effect of this scarcity of women is the spread of prostitution, and the consequent encouragement of the traffic in minor girls who

are considered by the owner in the nature of an investment. As is well known, the Government of India have decided to stop this trade, but so long as there continues to be this scarcity of women, no law can be expected to be of any great avail. For a proper solution of this problem, one has to look to the causes that have brought about its existence and try to remedy them. The Census Commissioner goes minutely into several of them and occasionally suggests the probable remedies. The consideration of that important question has been taken up in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XII

THE DEARTH OF WOMEN IN INDIA: II

In investigating the causes that have increased the dearth of women in India during the last decade, the Census tables furnish a number of facts from which we can verify and locate our inferences. First, the number of females per thousand males increased from 954 in 1881, to 958 in 1891, 963 in 1901 and then fell to 954 in 1911. We have also corresponding data for the different provinces, especially the Panjab, the United Provinces and Bengal. Secondly, below the age of five there are 1,038 female children in India against only 1,000 males. Except in the Panjab, this ratio is always greater than unity, showing thereby that the dearth is caused by causes which affect the females mainly after their fifth year. If we remember these two facts, the succeeding investigation will not present any appreciable complexity.

The theory that the dearth of women is only apparent, *i. e.*, due to the incompetency of the Census enumerators, has been almost completely shattered by

the relative decrease in their number during the last decade, since we have reasons to believe that the efficiency of the Census officers was superior in 1911 to that of any of the previous occasions. The returns at the recent Census have proved beyond all doubt that the dearth of women is as real as the existence of the theorists who deny it. What then are the causes? The most obvious is the higher rate of female mortality during epidemics. The recorded deaths from plague or any such severe epidemic, are more among females than among males and are in the ratio of 5 : 4. This is easily understandable if we remember the life Indian women are forced to lead by our social customs. Their household activities are such as to lay them open to infection more readily than the males. They nurse the persons suffering from contagious diseases, and they are most liable to the bites of the plague-infected rat-fleas or the malaria-carrying mosquitoes.

Two other causes to which Mr. Gait draws special attention are infanticide and neglect of female infant life. A dispassionate analysis of the facts contained in the Census Report itself leaves no doubt as to the exaggeration of both these causes by our well-meaning statisticians. As will be seen from the succeeding chapter, the contribution of infanticide to the present dearth of women is extremely small and refers only to the generation that is fast disappearing. As to the neglect of female life, I am inclined to think that where it exists, it is more or less habitual. Our civilisation—I speak of the real present, and not the

imaginary past—has taught us to regret the birth of female children and our social customs which demand a costly marriage besides a rich dowry, have naturally a tendency to create a sort of indifference, if not passive neglect, to female infant life; but anyone acquainted with Indian life, even in its most degenerate forms, will find it impossible to go further than this and generalise, as some of our missionary friends are doing from motives of self-interest, that Indian parents deliberately neglect children with the object of causing death. The vital statistics as modified by the actuary will show that the death-rate among female children is not at all greater than among male; as a matter of fact, it is in some provinces even less, as will be seen from a subsequent table in this article. Similarly exaggerated is the plea that the bad treatment of women, in after-life, especially of widows, is one of the chief causes of the numerical disparity of the sexes. I do not, however, in the least contend that our social customs have nothing to do with the phenomenon we are now investigating; all that is here emphasised is that the causes of the disparity do not spring from any deliberate action, *i. e.*, the pernicious customs in this respect on those whose influence is insidious. To give a concrete instance, the greatest waste of feminine life in India is owing to our system of child-marriage and the consequent low child-bearing age of our girls. How far this one custom is decimating the ranks of our women can be easily seen from the following table:

AVERAGE NUMBER OF FEMALE DEATHS PER 1,000 MALE DEATHS

	0–15	15–20	20–30	All Ages.
Bengal ...	813	1,215	1,171	897
Behar	824	889	1,013	949
Bombay ...	980	1,025	1,061	924
Burma ...	878	859	865	853
Central Provinces.	893	1,053	1,147	913
Madras ...	946	1,234	1,231	960
Panjab ...	1,032	966	1,055	968
Agra and Oudh ...	970	1,056	1,105	968

In these figures is summed up the whole case as regards the influence of our social customs on the greater death-rate of women. It is greatest between the ages of 15 and 30, the period when women are certainly most cared for in their life. After thirty, the death-rate falls much below that for all ages, as can be very easily inferred from the above table since the vast difference between the figures in the third and fourth columns has to be made up by smaller rates after 30 years. Thus leaving aside the alleged mortality through wanton neglect, the above figures reveal one of the most startling results of our system of early marriage. In estimating the exact amount of mortality, we have to remember one other fact, *viz.*, that the number of females per thousand males rarely exceeds that number. Thus while the proportion of women to men is as 82 to 100 in the Panjab, the number of deaths between the ages of 20 and 30 is as 1,055 to 968. Calculated in this way, the mortality

due to child-marriage will be found to be greater in Madras and Bengal than even in the Panjab and the United Provinces where the dearth of women is greatest. But the loss on this account is counterbalanced in the first two by the larger percentage of female births. This fact is worth remembering by all those of our orthodox friends who still believe that the salvation of India lies in lowering the increased age at which our girls are now married.

The orthodox Pandit may, of course, turn round at once and quite legitimately ask me: "Well, if what you say is true, how can you explain the relative increase of women between 1881 and 1901? The system of child-marriage was prevalent then and must have caused an equivalent loss of female life". Yes, no one can deny the havoc wrought by the system of early marriage in those two decades, or even in previous years, and the Census figures, where they are reliable, bear ample testimony to it. And the increase in the number of females per thousand males was only apparent and not due to any direct causes that might have increased their number. The mortality among men was much higher during those decades and there was a consequent levelling down in the sex proportions. The main cause of this was the loss through famine. It is a recognised fact that a famine carries away more men than women. This is the unanimous verdict of all famine commissioners, and is easily proved by the recorded figures of mortality. We can well understand why this should be so. It is the men that work hardest during a famine to get the

livelihood and the women generally stay at home to cook the food, at least during a good part of the time. That this is the chief cause of male mortality during famines can be also verified from the fact that the highest mortality among women too at those periods is confined to those of them who go out to work, *i. e.*, women above twenty-five years of age. Those below that limit are naturally the last to toil alongside the men in the famine works. Two other causes that account for the same difference in death-rates is the rule with famine workers to relieve first the sufferings of the children and women ; and also the lower birth-rate that follows famine years, and the consequent lower number of deaths during childbirth.

It only remains for me to consider how far the two causes I have already mentioned fit in with the facts recorded in the previous chapter. The system of early marriage is prevalent all over India and the loss of women during their child-bearing age explains why the preponderance of females among the children vanishes as we come to higher periods of life. The mortality through this cause is spread all over the country and is specially marked in Bengal and Madras where there should have been a very large preponderance of women but for this pernicious custom. In the Panjab and the United Provinces, the exceptionally low proportion of women is to be ascribed more perhaps to the first rather than to the second cause. As is plain from the above table, the loss of women between the ages of 15 and 30 is not so appalling in those two provinces as in the rest of this country.

The fact that there has been a decrease in the total population in that part of India during the last decade also confirms this view. The decrease is, as I have already pointed out, mainly due to plague, malaria, and other epidemics, and each of these carries away more women than men, and so long as they are allowed to rage unchecked, the proportion of women is bound to go down lower. This is also true of the other cause, *viz.*, the system of child-marriage. Even if the sanitary condition of the country should be improved, unless the latter defect is at once satisfactorily removed, there is little chance of our ever seeing a preponderance of females in this country. In fact, it is perfectly plain from the above figures that unless some unforeseen cause, such as famine, checks the increase in the male population, the next census returns are sure to indicate a smaller number of females per thousand males. This is one of the most important lessons which the present Census Report has revealed and I cannot but regret that it should have attracted practically no attention in the Indian Press.

CHAPTER XIII

INFANTICIDE IN INDIA

Mr. E. A. Gait, the officer in charge of the Census of India, 1911, had co-operated with Sir Herbert Risley in executing the same work a decade back, but for reasons which one does not understand, he has chosen in his present report to give undue prominence to the prevalence of infanticide in India. Mr. Gait admits that it is now extremely rare, at least in the form punishable by law. He is disposed to think that there still exists a modified and a more cruel form of it, in the shape of the wilful neglect of female children with the object of killing them by the time they become marriageable. This statement appears however, only as an assertion, unsupported by any evidence and, unfortunately, the returns in the case of females between 8 and 15 years of age are so unreliable in regard to almost the whole of this country, that no good use can be made of them in proving the existence or absence of any such practice. The report of the actuary, the figures in which alone can be utilised for any sceintific analysis, does not extend, in detail, to the different castes or the districts in which

this insidious form of infanticide is reported to exist at present. If, however, the returns supplied by the ordinary Census officers are taken as our basis, there seems to be little evidence in support of Mr. Gait's contention.

That infanticide was prevalent in India even as late as the fifties of the last century, is plain from the numerous reports of the administrative officers of the time. It was most common in Rajputana, the Panjab, United Provinces and among some of the aboriginal tribes in other parts. Groups of villages devoid of even a single female child are reported to have been numerous and many social customs and strange superstitions contributed to bring about such a shocking state of affairs. The heavy expenses of a marriage was naturally one of the most important of these causes. And then there was the difficulty of marrying a girl to the scion of a family of better social standing—a rule which is said to have largely encouraged infanticide in Rajputana. The Khonds, an aboriginal tribe of the Northern Circars, seem to have killed every female child within the 7th day of its birth under the belief that if dispatched within that period, it would never return in the next birth to the same family or clan. In this way they hoped to accelerate the percentage of males, while the other classes of people such as the Jats contented themselves with killing only the superfluous females. Mr. Gait points out in his report that with these people "it frequently happened that where several brothers lived jointly, the eldest alone married

and the younger brothers shared his wife" and thus they would have found no use for a large number of women.

Happily these days are now past. Thanks to the rigour of the Act VIII of 1870, infanticide has rapidly disappeared from this country; but it is yet too early to expect the prevalence of normal sex proportions in the affected tribes. In some of them, the number of women per thousand men is still extremely low. Among the Jat Sikhs of the Panjab, it is 702, 756 among Hindu Rajputs, 763 among the Gujars and 774 among the Hindu Jats. The following table will give a more correct view of the present situation:

FEMALES PER 1000 MALES

	0–5	5–12	12–15	15–20	20–40
Rajputs, P. ...	836	754	625	707	763
Gujars, U.P. ...	844	737	654	718	771
Jats, U.P. ...	852	766	725	693	772
Gujars, R.A. ...	984	825	650	691	847
Jats, R.A. ...	957	820	723	707	846
Rajputs, C.I.A. .	814	907	766	620	709
Gujars, C.I.A. ...	958	890	692	747	793

The figures relating to the number of girls between the ages of 12 and 15 cannot be relied upon since by general consent they are quite inaccurate in the case of all Hindu castes among whom girls are married at an early age. Leaving these figures apart, a healthy increase in the number of children is visible

among all the sects. The figures in the last two columns indicate the havoc wrought by early marriage and the prevalence of infanticide in past decades. If the Census returns had supplied the birthrate among these tribes, it would have been possible to ascertain how far the more insidious form of infanticide, cruel treatment of children, is prevalent among them. In its absence, the only test is a comparison of the figures in the first two columns of the above table in the light of similar returns in the case of the other castes among which infanticide is known to have never existed. If in such an investigation, we take into account communities which live closest to those under suspicion but which are free from any inclination to infanticide, the verdict will in no way militate against the suspects. Among the Mussalman Rajputs of the Panjab, there are 976 females under 5 years of age for every 1,000 male children, but the corresponding number for the age period of 5 to 12 is only 817. This difference is very remarkable in the case of several other castes equally free from the suspicion of infanticide in its modified form, and is generally attributed to the under-estimation of the age of children above 5 years.

In discussing the causes responsible for the dearth of women in India, I pointed out that the contribution of infanticide has been greatly exaggerated by the Census Commissioner, and perhaps my foregoing remarks create an impression against my own contention; but in the discussion of this question, one should not lose sight of the fact that the vice was prevalent

only in a small number of castes, totalling not more than ten millions at the highest. Consequently the greatest decrease which infanticide could have caused in the number of their females is less than a quarter of a million since the difference in the proportion of females per 1,000 males among these castes and their unsuspected neighbours is not more than 50 on an average. And when we consider the total population of this country, this difference seems quite insignificant. Anyhow it does not deserve the three pages of the Census Report which Mr. Gait has set apart for recording mainly the past history of infanticide, while ten years ago Sir Herbert Risley, his former chief, wisely contented himself with a bare paragraph.

CHAPTER XIV

MOTHERKIN

There are several castes in India that trace descent and transmit property in the female line. This system, known as Motherkin, though recognised by law, is supposed to be a relic of a primitive state of society, when promiscuity and polyandry were very common, and consequently paternity itself was not understood. Where it still prevails, the wife remains generally with her father and the son-in-law also lives with them, at least until a few children are born of her. In castes recognising this system, women are generally more respected than in others of the same social standing, leading in some instances to the recognition of women as the sole owners of property. Though Motherkin might have had its origin in promiscuity, yet it is wrong to suppose that in the castes which follow it at present unchastity is common. Of course except in a few instances, Motherkin now exists only among the aboriginal or low caste tribes, who rarely demand a pure life among their women, but where the tribes have emerged from their

previous semicivilised state, this system exists only so far as the transmission of property is concerned.

Motherkin is at present confined almost solely to Assam and the Malabar coast. In Assam, the Khasis trace their descent solely through the females. "No man can own any property except that which he acquires himself" and public offices are transmitted through women. Even a chief is succeeded, not by his own, but by his eldest sister's son. A husband generally lives in the house of his wife's parents and in some parts he can visit her only after dark. The property which he might have earned before marriage goes to the heirs of his parents, and he is entitled to give only his later earnings to his own children; but the distribution is seldom even, the youngest daughter getting the largest share. The ceremonial religion is in the hands of women and if none of them exist in a family, a girl is hired from another to perform the ceremonies and she will inherit the ancestral property. The marriage tie is, however, very loose among the Khasis and divorce is easily accomplished. Among the Garos, another tribe in Assam, all the ancestral property goes only to the girls and nothing to the sons. The husband has, however, full right over the property of the wife during his lifetime and he is empowered to select a person, called the *Nokrong* or house-supporter, who comes to live with them and generally marries one of his daughters and when he dies, also his widow! "Should a man's wife predisease him without daughters, or be divorced, *her* clan will provide him

with a second wife, who takes the property of the first wife and so maintains him in actual possession of it."

Motherkin, as it exists in the Malabar coast, is in several respects quite dissimilar from that obtaining in Assam. It is termed *Aliya Santana* in Canarese and *Marumakkathayam* in Malayalam. Even on the West Coast, there are a number of variations in its tenets as followed by the people of Malabar and South Canara. Tradition ascribes it to one Bhutal Pandya, one of the former potentates of South Canara, who, displeased with the disobedience of his sons and pleased with the obedience of his sister's children, is stated to have ordained that in future all ancestral property shall descend to the latter and not to the children of the owners. The system is still called after him, being known as Bhutal Pandya's *Kattu* in South Canara. The son-in-law lives according to it in his mother-in-law's family and his children are regarded as belonging to her family. The ancestral property cannot be partitioned except with the consent of all the members and none of them has any right to encumber or alienate it. All the descendants in the female line live together dependent on the common property, though a certain portion of it is usually set apart temporarily for the exclusive use of each single family in the house, who will have to look to its cultivation. The management of the whole property rests generally in the hands of only the senior member, who may be also a female in South Canara.

Amongst all these tribes, there is at present a tendency to cast away this system with the more backward of them, mainly those regarding whom the law has not as yet definitely established itself, there is no great difficulty in the way and the transformation is slowly going on. The father generally gives his own earnings to his children who in their turn bequeath it in the male line. Even where he has no occupation of his own, this practice is possible and is now extremely common. The senior member of any family being responsible to none as to the management of its finances, has little difficulty in appropriating a decent amount of money for the use of his own children who after his death are often summarily turned out of the family home. The customs prevailing among most of the backward tribes which now trace descent in the male line indicate that the number of castes that adhere to Motherkin were once vastly larger than at present. There are families which now trace descent through the males but which are well known to have done so through the females only a generation ago. The disappearance of Motherkin often leaves among its adherents several customs which are quite inexplicable on any other hypothesis. In some of the Assam tribes, sons are regarded as belonging to the father's clan and the daughters to that of the mother. Among several classes of Brahmins and non-Brahmins, even to-day, the maternal uncle is indispensable at the time of the nephew's *upanayanam* or niece's marriage. In some castes, the children belong to the

mother's clan, but inherit the property of the father's ancestors.

Motherkin is found in India also in several forms not described above. Thus in some castes, the son-in-law inherits the property of the father-in-law and not his nephew as is usually the case. In some instances, confusion prevails in this respect and it is generally avoided by marrying the daughter to the nephew, in which case, the ancestral property descends to him in the usual course. The importance which Motherkin gives to the nephew generally empowers him to perform even the obsequies of the uncle, thus resulting in his complete substitution in the son's place. In Southern India and the Central Provinces, a woman's brother claims her daughter for his son as a right and when she is given to some one else, he receives monetary compensation or a mock fight takes place between the two claimants for the girl's hand. In some tribes, as in the case of the Mukkuvans of Madras, children trace their descent according to the nature of the marriage of their parents. If it is the *Kalyanam* or the ordinary one, the children inherit the property of the father; if however the marriage takes the form known as *vidaram*, which is often a sham marriage, the children belong to the mother's family unless the father recognises them and makes a small payment to his wife in token of such recognition. Amongst the Coorgs, who do not trace descent through the female line, a father often gives his daughter in marriage on the express condition that the son-in-law should remain with him and his children should inherit

the grandfather's property. This is only a form of arrangement which prevails even among the highest class of Brahmins where the son-in-law lives always in the wife's home and is known commonly as *Gharjavai,* and the only difference is that the children of the latter *may* not inherit the property of the father-in-law, since he may be asked to live in the house even though his wife may have any number of brothers and sisters.

CHAPTER XV

POLYANDRY

Like Motherkin, polyandry is confined in this country only to the backward castes, chiefly aboriginal, and is also a survival of a primitive state of society. At the time when infanticide was prevalent in Northern India, polyandry was very often its necessary companion and disappeared with it in most parts. Though Motherkin leads to greater sexual laxity, polyandry is at present perhaps as common if not more, among the tribes that trace their descent from the males; but like Motherkin, polyandry is fast vanishing from this country and quite likely, at the end of two or three decades, it will live only in history like infanticide or communism. Mr. E. A. Gait thinks that polyandry must have been prevalent in India even in ancient days and cites the instance of Draupadi with her five husbands. It is a rule with historians to assert the existence of any custom in ancient days if in a work written at that time there are references, though mythical, to that practice; but even this statement does not enable us to draw Mr. Gait's inference from the

life of Draupadi. That lady is stated to have prayed five times for a husband and her subsequent experience is due to the coincidence of the prayer having been granted every time it was uttered. Moreover Kunti did not advise her marriage to the five brothers. This was again due to an accident. When Arjuna stated from outside the house that he had brought a valuable reward, the mother asked him to share *it* with his brothers. If these facts should be taken into consideration, Mr. Gait's conclusion seems incorrect as we are also led to infer from the high state of civilisation which is depicted in the *Mahabharata*.

Polyandry is of two kinds: the matriarchal, where husbands need not be related, and the fraternal, where they are brothers or sometimes even cousins on the father's side. The former, confined chiefly to those castes among whom Motherkin prevails, is only a modified form of communism and the husbands are mere lovers and last only so long as the woman is willing to have them. Fraternal or Tibetan Polyandry pertains to a somewhat higher state of civilisation, the common wife being accessible only to a set of close relatives of the formal husband. As I have already stated, it was the companion of infanticide among the Gujars, Jats and Rajputs of Northern India. According to some of the Census Superintendents, it is still prevalent among some of these sects, especially those who are yet inaccessible to civilisation. The following particulars from the Punjab Census report are interesting:

Polyandry is common among the Kanets of the higher hills, but the lower castes also practise it and the Rajputs and other castes residing in the tracts where this custom is prevalent, also appear to have been influenced by it. The polyandry practised generally is of the fraternal type known as Tibetan. All the brothers in a family have usually one joint wife. But only full brothers can do so although in some cases, step-brothers and cousins who are on as intimate terms as full brothers are allowed to share the common wife. In rare cases persons belonging to different families, marry a joint wife by agreement and merge their separate properties into a joint holding. The wife is married by a ceremony resembling marriage by capture. The rule about access to the wife is different in different places. The elder brother has usually the preference, and it is only in his absence that the younger brother can enjoy her company. But where the younger brothers go out for trade or on other business and one of them comes home periodically, the eldest brother allows him the exclusive use of the wife during the short visit. Where however all the brothers stay at home, the wife, not unfrequently, bestows her favour on all of them, by turn, one evening being reserved for each.

Generally all the children of the common wife are said to belong to the eldest brother, though they call all the husbands of their mother as fathers. In some cases, however, the first son is said to belong to the eldest brother, the second to the next and so on. In other cases, the wife is permitted to nominate the father of each child. These general principles, though common, have numerous exceptions. Thus even where a common wife is shared by all the brothers, any one of these is permitted to have another of his own who, on her part, may or may not consent to admit the claims of the other brothers. Generally

these exceptions are in the line of progress, leading in almost all cases to monogamy. It is also stated in the Punjab Census report that there is at present an active movement against polyandry even in the case of backward tribes and the Himalaya Vidya Prabodhini Sabha is reported to be leading the crusade under the guidance of H. H. The Raja of Keonthal.

In the Central Provinces, polyandry was once common among some of the tribes, but now it is very rare. The device by which it was got rid of is very interesting. During the marriage of any girl, the right of her husband's brothers is bought off at varying prices, but still they retain certain ceremonial rights. Thus when the eldest brother is away, any of the younger ones perform the ceremonies with the aid of the former's wife. In Southern India, only on the Malabar Coast is polyandry now existent. It is very common among the Todas but the practice prevalent among the Malabar Nayars has certain peculiarities similar to only those prevalent in Nepal —rather a singular coincidence on which no light has yet been thrown. The Malabar Marriage Commission has the following passage in its report on the nature of polyandry as prevalent among the Nayars:

> If by polyandry we mean a plurality of husbands publicly acknowledged by society and by each other and sharing between them a woman's favours by mutual agreement, the legal and regulated possession publicly acknowledged of one woman by several men who are all husbands by the same title, it may be truly said that no such custom is now recognised by the Marumakkathayam castes in Malabar. If by polyandry we simply mean a usage which permits a female to co-habit with a plurality

of lovers without loss of caste, social degradation or disgrace, then we apprehend that this usage is distinctly sanctioned by Marumakkathayam and that there are localities where, and classes among whom, this licence is still in practice.

CHAPTER XVI

CHASTITY AND MARRIAGE

Needless to say, the chastity of the wife is most highly prized by the vast majority of the Hindus and Moslems, more highly that it is in western countries —that is what we are told by impartial foreign and Indian observers. Even where the Purdah system is not in vogue, girls and women are not permitted any great freedom except with the closest relatives. Of course, here and there, thanks to the advent of western civilisation, a few exceptions to this rule are observable; but they are too few to be noticed. The bulk of educated Indians still do not permit their women to practise the freedom of their European sisters and the change which the present national awakening has brought about, is confined at the most only to giving them education up to the B. A. degree. Young women who have passed two to four years in a college consisting of a vast preponderance of students of the other sex are, as a rule, almost as shy and modest as their home-bred Purdah sisters in their attitude towards strangers or distant relations, and there does not seem to be any noteworthy desire on the part of English-educated youths to alter that mode of life. To be frank,

they believe that women enjoy freedom to a dangerous degree in the West, not necessarily in the camp of the suffragists or suffragettes—but even among the most devout anti-suffragists. I cannot say how far these fears are well-grounded; perhaps since there is no chance of the Indian women or even men ever revelling in balls and other such diversions peculiar to western people, there is no good reason to fear any distinctively bad consequences from encouraging the women to be more free than that they now are in educated families.

It is, however, a common error with the critics of Indian social life to suppose that no castes permit as much freedom to their women as in western society. As we shall presently see, the freedom enjoyed by women in certain castes has become most notorious. Of course, for such instances we have to pass on to the aboriginal or backward tribes—those very classes which have figured prominently in the two previous chapters. In certain communities both in Northern and Southern India, women enjoy freedom to an extraordinary degree, both before and after marriage, and it often leads them to sexual laxity. Strangely enough, however, the communities which allow undue freedom to unmarried girls are very scrupulous as their mode of life after their marriage and *vice versa*. Of course, there are certain tribes like the Todas among whom no notice is at all taken of sexual immorality. Perhaps they are not civilised enough to appreciate our standpoint, but they have become so accustomed to their indifference in these matters that

they bid fair to remain free, for even a century more, from the miseries of marital jealousy.

Among the Muhammadans, only the Pathans in Baluchistan are noted for the great freedom which they allow to their unmarried girls. If the aboriginal tribes as well as a few low caste Dravidian and Mongolian sects are left out, the Hindus are quite free from any such taint. Even among these exceptions, the communities that permit premarital communism are, comparatively speaking, very few. Where it is permitted, the women have to confine their amours only to the members of their own community. Certain Dravidian tribes impose a further restriction and prohibit intercourse in the exogamous group. A still modified form of communism exists in certain animistic tribes of Baroda, the Mudavars of Madras and the Ghasis of the United Provinces, "who allow a probationary period of cohabitation. No stigma attaches to the girl if this does not culminate in marriage, but in the case of the Baroda tribes, it is said that if a probationary husband should die prior to marriage, the girl must go through the ceremony with his dead body." In certain other backward castes, a more reformed state of affairs, almost verging on the border line between communism and chastity, is noticeable. To give two instances: "A Gujar girl going astray with a man of another caste is expelled from the community; but if the lover is a Gujar, her offence is condoned on the parents giving a feast. . . . With the Garos, it is an unwritten law that young men and girls may sleep together after certain great feasts."

Fewer still are the tribes that permit freedom after marriage. Most of the aboriginal tribes, who, as indicated above, allow premarital communism, are very intolerant of the infidelity of their women after marriage. Among those that permit it, the most notorious are the Jats of Baluchistan and certain other wandering tribes in Northern India, specially the Mirasis. In South India, save among a few unimportant aboriginal tribes, freedom after marriage is practically non-existent except among the Malayalis living in the hills. Mr. Gait quotes in this connection, the experiences of a Missionary, resident among the Malayalis on the Sherveroy Hills—rather a dangerous class of person to be called as a witness in questions of this kind. Here are his experiences, which, I am given to understand, depicts the existing state of affairs in a highly exaggerated form :

> Shortly after marriage, the woman usually runs away with somebody but returns at some later period to her lawfully wedded husband, bringing all her children who have been born in the interval, for the children are reckoned to belong to her husband whoever might be their father. In the meanwhile, the man may have had a number of children by some other women, but these are not his but belong to the woman's husband. I had for years a man and a woman working for me, who I thought were husband and wife. It was only when her lawful husband came to claim her that I found out this was not so. He stopped with them for a night and was quite friendly, had a good dinner and went away the next morning, telling me that she was not willing to return to him yet.

In view of the nature of the subject dealt with in this and the two previous chapters, I may again warn the reader from attaching an undue importance to

these remnants from barbaric days in India. Thanks to the slanders of interested persons, the people of India are already not being done justice to and I do not wish to figure as one that accentuates that misfortune. Hence this repeated warning. Though Motherkin is prevalent among respectable classes of Indians, polyandry and unchastity are confined only to the aborigines and certain low castes, far lower in the social scale than the so-called "untouchables" that we meet with in our towns. Even among these, unchastity is looked down upon and is punished very severely, sometimes often with death, the occurrence being afterwards explained to the Government officials as being due to snake bite or such other accidental cause. In fact, the only variety of effective excommunication known in these days is the fate of the unchaste woman. She is cast away both by the orthodox and the English-educated Indians. Of course, there are and will be exceptions, but they only prove the rule.

CHAPTER XVII

RESTRICTIONS ON MARRIAGE

The innumerable restrictions which the Indians patiently suffer in the matter of marriage baffle the comprehension of even the most intelligent of my own countrymen. If one confines oneself to any definite sect or caste, the restrictions are not many, but if the investigator passes on to the next, the problem is very often most bewildering; the restrictions are quite contrary to each other in details but out of this apparent chaos, it is quite possible to pick out the broad features which are common among the vast majority of the Hindus. To sum them up in a sentence, we permit marriage only in the same caste but prohibit it in the same family group. There are of course several variations in reckoning the groups which are exogamous, *i.e.*, do not intermarry. In a majority of cases, families with the same *gotras*, *i.e.*, which trace their descent from the same ancient sage, are exogamous. But the restrictions often go beyond this simple rule. Sometimes, as among the Marathas, marriage is not permitted between the groups to which either of the parents belong whereas, in most others, such relationship is considered

ideal. The restriction that is found more galling in certain small sects is perhaps the positive one, *viz.*, marriages should take place within the sect, not even the caste. This rule is often extended to extreme limits. Thus in certain sects in Southern India, the elders of both the families which intend to connect themselves in marriage should meet, along with some other respectable persons of the same sect, to discuss whether both the families are connected with each other by any existing relationship—a process which is found most tedious if some of the judges are intent on ending the engagement. In this way, members of the same sect, by the absence of any well-known connection that can be established to the satisfaction of the exacting elders, drift away from each other to such an extent that at the end of a generation they are looked upon as belonging to two different exogamous sects. Fortunately these restrictions are gradually disappearing. Marriages between the members of two sects which in a previous generation were considered exogamous, are now very common and the only restrictions which are not "more honoured in the breach" are those imposed by the *gotras*, and the castes. Even the obstacle of the horoscopes, which is one of the most serious impediments to marriage, in higher castes, is now rapidly vanishing. If the horoscopes of the couple do not agree, the priest readily undertakes to avoid the trouble by creating an "agreeable" horoscope, a device which, while increasing in usage, is a potent factor in diminishing the belief of the people in the necessity

of consulting the horoscopes before deciding the match.

Among the Muhammadans, the restrictions on marriage are very few, and simple. It is considered desirable that a man should take, as his first wife, a virgin bride of the same social standing as himself, and preferably of the same main division or tribe. As regards subsequent wives, there is no restriction whatever. Marriage is most common between first cousins, whether the children of two brothers, or sisters, or of a brother and sister. Failing this, they prefer connection with a close relative, rather than a distant one. Thus there are no exogamous groups in the same sect or caste and the restrictions require—and that too not tacitly—them not to go beyond their own castes. There are of course a few exceptions to this freedom. "The Muhammadans of Gilgit do not share the general predilection in favour of cousin marriage, and they forbid altogether the marriage of a man with the daughter of his maternal uncle"—an alliance that is most common among the Hindus. This freedom is also non-existent among local converts to Muhammadanism who, like their Christian brethren, follow very closely the customs which they were following while in the Hindu camp. Among these converts, marriage is generally confined within the limits of the same group or sect, as in the case of the Hindus.

The restrictions are fewer still among the Buddhists and the Animists. "The Burmese have no restrictions in marriage beyond the simple rule that a man

may not marry his mother, daughter, sister, aunt, grandmother or granddaughter. He may marry any one else." The Tibetans forbid marriage between cousins germane, and the Bhatias confine the prohibition to cousins on the father's side. Among the Animistic tribes, Mongolian or Dravidian, marriage is permitted only within the tribal limits, but this rule is not rigidly followed. They have also the further restriction, resembling very closely the *gotra* obstacle, but instead of the Rishis after whose names the Hindus subdivide their sects, the Animists have their own primitive way of classing their families by what is called a *totem*, a species of animal or plant between which and himself a savage recognises a mysterious relationship. Families having the same *totems* do not intermarry, as do those having the same *gotra*. In addition to this certain Animists tribes are hampered by certain additional restrictions: Thus in Southern India, the Irulas have six subdivisions not based on *totems*, and five of them are regarded as related, so intermarriage can only take place between them. But unmeaning restrictions like these are rapidly disappearing in the wake of advancing civilisation, yet in their path of progress, they show no sign of copying the equally troublesome restrictions prevailing among Brahmanas, as has been the case with several castes now lower in the social hierarchy.

CHAPTER XVIII

INFANT MARRIAGE IN INDIA

The figures relating to the civil condition of the people of India, as given in the Census Report, form perhaps its most interesting and instructive part. The facts narrated therein are of as much importance to the Social Reformer as to the average Indian, especially the conservative person who still refuses to believe that there is anything in that system of which we are to be ashamed. As is generally known, if the system of early marriage is a discreditable badge on the status of any race, Hindus suffer most, more than even the aboriginal tribes. Next come the Muhammadans, followed closely by the Animists, and last of all come the Buddhists of Burma, among whom infant marriage is not at all prevalent. The following table, giving the proportion of marriage per mille of each sex at the age periods "0-5" and "5-10," enables us to form an estimate of its prevalence in each of these groups :

	0-5		5-10	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
All Religions ...	7	14	37	105
Hindu	10	18	48	132
Musalman ...	2	5	15	65
Buddhist ...	—	—	—	—
Animist	4	4	10	22
Christian	2	4	6	15

Though the Hindus are thus the worst sinners, several castes show better figures than any other group except the Buddhists. And strange as it may seem, infant marriage is least prevalent among the Brahmanas in almost every province. The castes in which it is most prevalent are the non-Brahmana, and there too, chiefly among the least civilised—rather an unexpected phenomenon in view of the comparative non-prevalence of that practice among the Animists, who generally resemble those tribes in other distinctive features.

Before passing on, however, to the enumeration of these castes, I should turn for a moment to a question of the utmost importance, *viz.*, is the practice of early marriage becoming less common? Unfortunately the figures are not conclusive, except in a few select tribes and localities. In India as a whole, the answer to that question depends upon the interpretation we put on the abnormal figures recorded in this respect and several others in the previous Census. The year 1901 was preceded by numerous famines of the severest type and the mortality was large, especially among the males, causing thereby a larger proportion of widows. But what is their influence on child marriage? Do famines retard it or increase it? Mr. Gait, the Census Commissioner, is of opinion—and unfortunately he does not give his reasons for arriving at that conclusion—that famines retard marriages. If that be so, the figures are slightly encouraging. The following table gives the number of married persons for every 1,000 of each.

Age	1881	1891	1901	1911
Males				
0-5	24	6	7	7
5-10		36	36	37
10-15	152	154	134	129
Females				
0-5	75	13	13	14
5-10		123	102	105
10-15	500	495	423	430

These figures naturally vary for the different races. Among the Hindus, there has been distinct improvement during the past 30 years. There has been a satisfactory decrease in the percentage of the married males as well as females, and more remarkable has been the fall among the Muslims. The following table enables us to compare the decrease in each of the races:

No. of Married Persons per 1,000 of each sex

	Male		Female	
	1881	1911	1881	1911
Hindus ...	206	188	620	563
Muslims ...	100	84	519	428
Buddhists ...	2	2	10	8
Animists ...	89	62	245	192

But it is a mistake to be satisfied with these figures. Firstly the figures for 1881 cannot be relied on to any

large extent. Parents are generally very reluctant to give the proper age of unmarried girls, especially in castes addicted to the system of early marriage, and considering the decreasing unpopularity of the census operations among the people in general, it is very probable that the figures of 1881 err on the side favourable to the able calculations. Unfortunately the troubled condition of the country in 1901 and even in 1891, due to the incessant famines and the want of any exact knowledge of the effect of such disasters on the civil condition of the people, do not enable us to appraise the above table at its correct value. All the same, the above figures are not in any manner discouraging to the reformer. I have already pointed out that it is generally the non-Brahmana castes that are most given to child marriage—a fact which has been completely ignored by those who generally pass as Social Reformers. Thus for instance, in Bengal, while in the higher castes only ·2 per cent of the people are married under five years of age, among some of the lower castes it ranges from 4·3 to ·9 per cent. Again in Behar, the percentage for the same age period among the backward classes rises to 10·2, while among the higher ones it falls to less than 1. Similarly in other provinces, including Baroda, where marriage is prohibited below eight years of age.

The comparison of the figures also for the different provinces yields some interesting results. Apart from Burma, where infant marriage is unknown, even in the other provinces, its prevalence does not always correspond to the status of the castes. Thus "amongst

the Brahmins, the proportion of girls aged '0-5' who are married is only 3 per mille in Bengal, 7 per mille or less in Bombay, Madras and several Native States. While in Behar and Orissa and the Central Provinces and Berar, it is 12, in Hyderabad 31 and in the Central India Agency 60 per mille." The corresponding figures for certain low caste tribes in Behar ranges between 72 and 84, while in the same castes in Bengal, the number does not exceed 7. These instances can be multiplied to any extent, but they do not lend themselves to any inferences unless it is that in certain provinces infant marriage is more prevalent in all the castes while their neighbours are more or less free. The following table is instructive on this point:

NUMBER PER 1,000 AGED "0-10" WHO ARE MARRIED

Province	Males		Females	
	1881	1911	1881	1911
Bengal	5	7	103	64
Behar	80	77	147	132
Bombay	28	35	103	109
Burma	2	3	2	8
Central Provinces ...	31	29	120	99
Madras	8	6	43	31
Panjab	...	12	...	32
United Provinces ...	23	30	53	59
Baroda	73	80	171	144
Hyderabad	27	25	134	127

These figures are most informing, more so than any other in this chapter. Here we have facts relating to each province, pointing out thereby the localities that are most in need of reform. From this standpoint, the present situation is not encouraging. The reform movement is stronger in the provinces where there is less urgent need for it, except in the case of Baroda, where a rapid improvement may perhaps be visible during the course of the next few years. The above figures refer only to the Hindus, but they reflect the prevalent state of affairs also among the Muslims and other races, though in certainly a less acute form.

CHAPTER XIX

CHILD WIDOWS IN INDIA

Where there is child marriage, there cannot but be child widows and their proportion varies directly as the rate of infant mortality. So there is every reason to expect a large number of them in India. In the previous article I have shown how thousands of children are married in their infancy, and with a rate of infant mortality as high as 250 per mille, a large proportion of the couples again become free from the shackles of wedded life within a year or two of marriage. But fortunately mortality does not seem to be as prevalent among married infants as among the unmarried, so that for 13,212 married female children less than a year old, we have only 1,014 widows of the same age. The proportion of freed children increases with the age period; so much so that only a fifteenth of the married girls of 5 years have been returned as widows. Among boys, the

ratio is still less, being only 1 to 23. Here are the exact figures :

Age Period	Male		Female	
	Married	Widowed	Married	Widowed
0—1	10,164	432	13,212	1,014
1—2	9,675	473	17,753	856
2—3	26,153	1,044	49,787	1,807
3—4	40,879	1,802	87,568	4,753
4—5	64,647	2,917	134,105	9,273
0—5	151,518	6,668	302,425	17,703
5—10	810,577	91,995	2,219,778	94,270
10—15	2,403,136	177,694	10,087,024	223,042

Thus there are at present in India not less than 350,000 widows under 15 years of age, of whom 17,000 are not even 5 years old. These figures, I must however point out, are highly satisfactory in view of those revealed at the last census. In 1901, there were 19,487 widows under 5 years and more than 390,000 below 15 years of age. Thus there has been a very encouraging improvement during the decade. A decrease of 11 per cent in 10 years is surely a very good record if it has been achieved by causes brought about by mortal agency. But when we turn to the

figures of those married in the same age periods, we find that it has remained stationary during the decade, so that the improvement is due to a large extent to the fall in infant mortality, which, we know, has appreciably decreased in the provinces returning the largest number of child widows. But all the same, the figures reveal a turn in the right direction. That the number of children married in the age periods of 0—5, and 0—15 should have remained unchanged while the total population of the country increased by 7 per cent, is certainly a satisfactory record; but while the Social Reformer may be pardoned if he feel proud of it, he should not forget that what has been achieved by him—if at all it is he who is responsible for the improvement—forms only an infinitesimal portion of the work that lies before him in the same field.

The child widows are to be found only among the Hindus, Muslims, and the Animists and among them only in certain provinces. The Parsis have among them only two widows under five years, 6 under ten and 12 under fifteen. The record of the Buddhists, considering their total strength, is even cleaner. They have only a single child widow, 18 under ten years and 176 under fifteen. The Jains, however, though closely akin to them in religious tenets, have a far larger number of these unhappy children and women. For a total population of a million and a quarter—the Buddhists number eight times as many—they have 15 widows less than a year old, 92 under five, 261 under ten and 906 under fifteen. The number of

those among the other religions can be seen from the following table :

Age Periods	Hindus	Muslims	Animists
0—1	866	109	17
1—2	755	68	23
2—3	1,564	166	45
3—4	3,987	509	207
4—5	7,603	1,281	307
0—5	14,775	2,133	599
5—10	77,585	14,276	1,239
10—15	181,507	36,264	2,566

The Animists number only 10 millions and so the Jains have a far worse record than even they. Considering the total number of people professing each of the great religions of India, in the order of discredit the Jains surpass all the rest, followed rather closely by the Hindus, then the Muslims, the Animists, and lastly the Buddhists.

We have now only to carry out our analysis according to the different provinces. In doing so, we shall leave out of consideration those, such as Burma, where there are practically no child widows. The following table shows the records of the guilty provinces :

MARRIED GIRLS AND WIDOWS BELOW 10 YEARS OF AGE

Provinces	Married		Widowed	
	1901	1911	1901	1911
Bengal ...	1,016,710	357,111	54,294	17,583
Behar ...		639,985		36,265
Bombay ...	167,170	221,913	9,736	6,729
Madras ...	135,743	161,120	4,725	5,046
United Provinces ...	336,874	329,875	12,162	17,209
Baroda ...	21,431	33,235	1,482	783
Hyderabad ...	138,909	211,006	9,064	6,782

The figures for Bengal and Behar as given in the Census Report of 1911 refer to areas quite separate from those referred to in the previous report, but the aggregate figures show to some extent, the directions in which things have been moving during the past decade. Considering the increase in the total population of the two provinces, the present figures mark a decade of encouraging improvement. Among the other provinces, Madras has fared worse, so also the United Provinces. The figures for Bombay are a little surprising. There is a decrease in the number of widows, but not in that of married girls. To some extent it must be due to the periods of scarcity from which it suffered in the previous decade and the comparative freedom from the same during the last one. As was pointed out in a previous article on this subject, famines have a tendency to carry away the male adults and consequently a larger number of

girls must have been widowed in 1890—1901. The same phenomenon is observable in Baroda and Hyderabad and very probably is due to the same cause.

The aim of this article is only to bring to light one of the most hideous revelations of the Census Report, and the reader should not therefore be surprised by the absence of any remarks expressing abhorrence at the existence of so many widowed girls. Of course, a small minority of them will be remarried, since among those castes who marry during infancy, widow remarriage is fortunately prevalent. But among the rest and the vast majority, the child widows have no better prospect than that of a dreary single life. Not much notice has been taken in this article of widowed boys or young men. That their number is large is plain from the first set of figures given in this article; but beside the misery which their sisters have to suffer, their future is very happy since they are permitted to marry any number of times and consequently their widowhood is only temporary. The absence of any reference to widows above fifteen years of age is perhaps less excusable on my part; but as the heading will show, I have attempted here to indicate that it is the injustice which we do to a group of children that is most in need of prompt redress; but so blunted has our sense of justice been, no such desired consummation can be expected for at least a generation to come.

CHAPTER XX

ILLITERACY

The report on the Census of India throws much light on one side of educational progress in India. It shows how the multiplication of schools and colleges will not put down illiteracy as rapidly as it is expected to do, and also how even, when primary education becomes universal and compulsory, more than half the total population will continue to be illiterate. Of course by fixing the period of instruction for each child, this ratio may be further decreased; for the present, a wide difference between the number of those under instruction and the literate is due, among other causes, mainly to the short period during which the pupils are now at school. In the opinion of the Educational Department, at least five years of instruction in a primary school is needed before a person becomes literate, the average duration is now less than four years, and the number of pupils remaining at school for the required period is only 148 out of every 1,000 under instruction. If we understand this inter-relation, there will be little that is strange in the following comparisons:

Province	No. of pupils per 1,000 persons aged 10—15	No. of literates per 1,000 persons aged 15—20
British India ...	235	91
Assam ...	252	69
Bengal ...	316	100
Behar ...	186	59
Bombay ...	429	105
Burma ...	312	290
Central Provinces ...	235	64
Madras ...	254	107
Panjab ...	154	54
United Provinces ...	121	50

The influence, exercised by the kind of education now imparted in India, in putting down illiteracy becomes more exactly estimated when we deduct from the latter set of figures the number of those who secured their learning outside the school, as is the case with several mercantile communities.

The test employed by the Census officers in 1911 to ascertain literacy, was more accurate and definite than on previous occasions. Only those who could write a letter to a friend and read the reply were classed as such, and even those of our scholars who can repeat our epics chapter by chapter, but who cannot write and sometimes also read, were grouped among illiterates! But obviously the number of such exceptional persons is small, at least smaller than those who, though illiterate according to the test employed, must have deceived the Census officer into classing them as literates. Thus, if

the Census returns are in any way inaccurate, they err only on the side of leniency.

Of the total population of India only 59 out of every 1,000 persons are literate in the sense of being able to write a letter to a friend and to read the reply, and literacy is divided very unequally between the two sexes. Thus whereas 106 males per mille can read and write, only 10 females per thousand can lay any claim to that distinction. The progress in the different provinces is of course very unequal as is shown by the following table :

NUMBER PER 1,000 WHO ARE LITERATE

Provinces and States	Persons	Males	Females
British India ...	62	110	11
Assam ...	47	86	6
Bengal ...	77	140	11
Behar ...	39	76	4
Bombay ...	69	120	14
Burma ...	222	376	61
Central Provinces ...	33	62	3
Madras ...	75	138	13
Panjab ...	37	63	6
United Provinces ...	34	61	5
Baroda ...	101	175	21
Hyderabad ...	28	51	4
Mysore ...	63	112	13
Travancore ...	150	248	50

Thus Burma easily heads the list in the list of provinces, and Travancore among the States. This superiority is no doubt due to the love of learning in the two localities and also to the encouragement

which religious organisations give to the same. Mr. Gait explains the disproportionate progress in the different British provinces by the theory that it corresponds with the date of their annexation by the East India Company. It is really difficult to understand this absurd relationship. The British Rulers decided to encourage education only after all the provinces had been annexed by the Company. Moreover Bengal and Behar were won at the same period and yet the expenditure on education in the latter is half of what it is in the former.

One interesting fact is noteworthy in understanding the amount of illiteracy in this country. The proportion of literates is highest among males at "20 and over," and among females—21 per mille—at the age-period 15—20. The latter phenomenon is not strange since that is exactly the time when we can expect the largest proportion of literates. In the previous age-period, they are generally in the school and are thus only getting rid of illiteracy, and in the later, they have begun to forget their learning on account of the absence of any opportunities to retain it. To explain the seemingly inconsistent state of affairs among the males, Mr. Gait gives three reasons. First, at the age of 15, the boy, yet at school, may not have learned to read and write; secondly, the enumerators may have been stricter in classing young men of 15—20 among the literates, and thirdly, "amongst the trading classes, who generally have a large proportion of literate persons, the knowledge is picked up gradually in the course of business

and a youth may often be twenty years, or even older, before he is fully competent to read and write.

It only remains for us to analyse the Census returns on the basis of religion, though, it must be admitted, that the comparisons are of no great value by reason of different rates of progress in the different provinces.

LITERATES PER MILLE

Religions	Persons	Males	Females
All Religions ...	59	106	10
Zoroastrian ...	711	782	637
Brahmo ...	696	739	648
Jain ...	275	495	40
Arya ...	260	394	92
Buddhist ...	229	404	58
Christian ...	217	293	139
Sikh ...	67	106	14
Hindu ...	55	101	8
Musalman ...	38	69	4
Animist ...	6	11	1

Needless to say, several sects among the Hindus are as educated as the Jains or the Buddhists and perhaps as the Zoroastrians so far as the males are concerned. It may also be interesting to know that the proportion of literates among Indian Christians is far less than among the total number of Christians, due, no doubt to the extraordinary efforts made to educate the Eurasians and Europeans.

CHAPTER XXI

INDIAN LANGUAGES

One of the arguments advanced by the critics of Indian nationalism to point out that India can never be united into a nation is that there are 539 spoken languages in the country. This number is so frequently repeated, and that to emphasise the same conclusion, that I carefully analysed the Census tables to find out its origin, but my efforts have not proved successful. According to those returns there are only 220 "spoken languages" in this country and of them—this is most noteworthy—no less than 141 belong to the Tibeto-Chinese family which is used as the vehicle of speech only by 12.9 million people. Thus if we exclude Burma and some parts of Assam where these languages are spoken, the Indian Empire contains only 79 languages in all, used by no less than 321 million people. If we carry out our analysis still further, it is found that the evil prognostications of our critics, based on the existence of 539 separate languages are extremely far fetched, though one must admit that we have still more languages than are essential or useful for our national progress. The main

features of the returns dealing with the languages of this country are evident from the following table, in which the number of speakers is in millions :

Vernaculars	No. of Speakers		No. of Languages Spoken
Austro-Asiatic Family ...		4·39	
Mon-Khmer Sub-family ...	·5		,7
Munda „ ...	3·8		16
Tibeto-Chinese family ...		12·9	
Tibeto-Burmese Sub-family ...	10·9		121
Siamese-Chinese „ ...	2·0		20
Dravidian Family ...		62·7	
Dravida Group ...	37·1		11
Andhra „ ...	24·1		3
Others ...	1·5		1
Indo-European Family ...		232·8	
Iranian Branch ...	2·0		5
Indian „ ...	230·7		32

Thus if we take only the Dravidian and the Indo-European families, which by the way contain the languages spoken by more than 95 per cent of the Indian people, there are only 52 spoken languages in this whole country.

This is not the place to deal at any length with the controversy that periodically arises regarding the superiority of Hindi or Urdu, or even to discuss how far any of them can be the *lingua franca* of this Empire. Suffice it to say that in Northern India, except some parts of the Panjab and Sind, the knowledge of Hindi will suffice for the needs of a traveller, though in South India, Hindustani, the

Persianised form of which is Urdu, is a far better equipment than the rival language. Unfortunately the Census figures do not warrant any further discussion, even on purely academic lines, of this interesting question of mutual strength. As the Census Commissioner for the United Provinces points out in his report: "It is not too much to say that the figures as they stand are evidence only of the strength or weakness of the agitation [on behalf of these languages] in particular districts." That being the case it is fruitless to linger any further here, except to warn the reader against assuming that Hindi as spoken in different parts of Northern India does not materially differ in form. The Hindi in the West, *i.e.*, spoken in Bihar, is far different from the Hindi of the Panjab or of the western districts of the United Provinces.

A brief description of the other different languages in India may not be without interest in this brief review. To take the largest branch after the Indo-European, the Dravidian languages are spoken mostly in Southern India, though strangely enough some adherents to them are to be found in Baluchistan. The Oraon and the Malto of Behar also belong to this branch, but the total followers of it outside South India do not number even half a million. Though it is not within the scope of this article to go back to the sources of this language or even to trace its affinity with the other groups in India, it may be noted here—especially in view of the mistaken view taught to us in our geographical primers—that the opinion

is now gathering strength that the Dravidians did not come from the north-west of India but were existent in this country alone. We come next to the Tibetan group, in which the most prominent is the Burmese with nearly 8 million followers. The Austro-Asiatic family, though not numerically important, is of very great interest to linguists. Its chief sub-family comprises the Munda languages, of which again the Karwa spoken by the aborigines in Behar, Bengal and Orissa is the most important. "Though the number of persons using these languages is now only about three millions, there are signs that they were formerly much more widespread. Sir George Grierson suggests "that the numerous Bhil tribes..... may have originally used the Munda form of speech. ..... From these data it may perhaps be inferred that Munda dialects were current over the greater part of the Indo-Gangetic plain before the advent of the hordes who brought the Aryan languages to India." Like the Munda languages in Upper India, the Mon Khmer, the other sub-family in the Austro-Asiatic group, was "very widely spoken in Burma not many centuries ago. They still flourish in the neighbouring countries of Annam and Combadja, and amongst the Nicobarese and the aborigines of the Malay Peninsula. But in Burma, they survive only in the Shan States and round Pegu." The disappearance of this language is due mainly to the encouragement given to the Burmese language by the rulers that came into possession of the country in 1757.

There is one interesting feature specially noteworthy regarding most of these 220 spoken languages. Most of them are rapidly disappearing. The Aryan languages, by reason of the superior civilisation of their adherents, are cheerfully learned by most of the aboriginal tribes, among whom alone the other languages, except those of the Dravidian group, are spoken. This movement is most rapid in the case of languages, without a script, and the next few decades will perhaps witness the passing away of many languages, some of which even now do not count more than a hundred thousand adherents. Though from the standpoint of the linguist, this loss may be regrettable, to the formation of national life in India it is very helpful. Of course it now seems foolish to contemplate the arrival of the day when this process of gradual elimination will do away with even the main Dravidian languages; but even before it proceeds within those precincts, the present movement will have done enough to abolish much of the difficulty caused at present by the diversity of languages.

CHAPTER XXII

INSANITY

"It is well-known that insanity increases with the spread of civilisation, owing to greater wear and tear of nerve tissues involved in the struggle for existence." "According to the latest returns the proportion of persons thus afflicted in England and Wales is 364 per hundred thousand of the population, or 14 times the proportion in India."

These two statements from the report on the Census of India sum up the situation in this country so far as insanity is concerned. Thanks to the comparative tranquillity of the life which it is still our good fortune to lead in India, the percentage of insane among even the most afflicted localities or tribes is less than in the least afflicted locality in civilised Europe, and it is highly satisfactory to note that the influx of western civilisation into this country during the past few decades has not materially increased the proportion of insane among us. The total number of these in the whole country is only 81,006, or 126 less than in 1881, though the past decade shows an increase of nearly 15,000. This

difference is however due to certain abnormal conditions which governed the figures of the previous Census. In 1901, we had just emerged from the quarter of a century that witnessed no less than seventeen cruel famines, which, as can be easily understood, affect the infirm far more acutely than the able-bodied. These famines had thus brought about a progressive decrease since 1881 in the number of insane people in the country, and the comparative absence of famine conditions since 1901 largely explains the present increase. The figures for 1891, though still influenced by famines, give a better basis for comparison, more especially as in that year the Census enumerators are reported to have taken special care to secure correct returns. On this basis, the total number of insane persons in the country has increased by 9 per cent, but the falsity of this comparison is manifest from the fact that the proportion of the insane per hundred thousand of the population has actually decreased during the twenty years from 27 to 26. This decline is also fairly general, the chief exception being the United Provinces, where there was a marked increase from 12 to 18, though happily the proportion in 1911 is still lower than the average in the whole country.

The causes of insanity are not yet known, though generally speaking, it is said to be due to the wear and tear of nerves due to modern civilisation. In India very crude beliefs exist as to its origin. The most common is its supposed relationship with monetary offence against a God. If the money dedicated to God is appropriated, the surest punishment is lunacy. This

explanation is very popular and the prevalence of the belief itself is perhaps responsible for a good many cases of insanity. The appropriation of money dedicated to God is common in these days of poverty, the plunder taking first the form of the pledge that the money so taken will be returned with exorbitant interest in due course—a promise rarely fulfilled even regarding the principal amount itself. Among other popular beliefs may be mentioned the neglect to worship the family God, the curse of a Yogi or Sadhu, or demoniacal possession. Of course none of these are believed in by scientific critics, who often trace the infirmity to social practices, locality or race. The returns concerning India demonstrate the relationship between insanity and the first of these conditions, but not the other two. Among social practices, widowhood, consanguineous marriages and the consumption of intoxicants are commonly mentioned in this connection; but evidence is not strong enough to establish any direct connection between lunacy and any of these except the last. Of the intoxicants, ganja is the most powerful in its effect on the mental equilibrium of the victim, especially when the drug is consumed immoderately. Opinion is sharply divided as to the influence of consanguineous marriages in causing this infirmity. A Census Superintendent summarises the discussion on this topic thus: "Nothing in our present knowledge can be taken with any confidence as a reason for regarding consanguineous marriages as improper or specially dangerous. All that can be said is that such marriages

give extra chances of the appearance of recessive characteristics amongst the offspring." Equally indefinite is the verdict regarding the influence of enforced widowhood. Of course it should cause no wonder if more correct statistics—there is reason to suppose that the present ones are extremely defective on this point—should prove that this most scandalous defect of our social system makes a notable contribution to the number of insane women of India.

It has been already stated that the figures furnished by the Census of India do not reveal any scientific relationship between lunacy and local or social conditions. Of course there are a few tribes and localities where the proportion of the insane is very high, but the distribution of these is so varied and unconnected that, with the knowledge at the disposal of the scientists of the day, no definite connection can be established between them. In the Panjab and Bombay, insanity is more prevalent among tracts where the Muslims preponderate, but even there, there is no marked difference between the percentage of insane among them and their Hindu neighbours. Further, this peculiarity is not observable in other provinces, where the Muslims form the majority of the population. Similarly, lunacy is more prevalent among certain aboriginal tribes of Assam, but their neighbours, though no less primitive, are more free. Coming to localities, insanity is greater in Burma and Baluchistan than in any other part of India. In some provinces only certain

districts are more affected. Thus the South-East and North-East of Bengal, the foot of the Himalayas in the United Provinces, Sind in Bombay, the Lushai Hills in Assam, suffer more from this malady than the adjacent localities in the same provinces. Perhaps minuter investigation by experts may reveal a definite connection between what now seem to be unconnected facts, but before any such inference is possible the Census enumerations will have to be considerably improved.

There is, however, one feature of this investigation regarding which it is possible to speak with some definiteness, viz., the age periods when insanity is most common. There is very little lunacy among children, and taking the country as a whole, females suffer far less than the males. The highest percentage among women is only ·037, while among men it rises to ·049 between 30 and 40 years. Among them, the proportion goes on increasing up to the age of 40, from which age the percentage drops considerably. Insanity is most common among women above 50 years. Thus there is a wide difference between the age periods when men and women are most prone to go mad. The difference is greatest between the ages 25 and 40, when the most men and the fewest women are insane. Some more inferences are possible from the study of the figures on this topic. The difference between the percentages of insane is least where women are most free, as in Burma and Cochin, and "amongst Europeans and Anglo-Indians, female lunatics are more numerous than males". Can this be due

to the fact that lunacy, which we know is markedly impartial to modern civilisation, influences women more strongly than men?

CHAPTER XXIII

DEAF-MUTES

Unlike the case of insanity, the proportion of deaf-mutes to the total population in India does not materially differ from the corresponding ratio in European countries. Among every hundred thousand of the population, 74 males and 53 females are here deaf and dumb from birth; but strange as it may seem, while the average rate agrees with the one prevailing in Europe, there are several parts of this country, where such afflicted people are found in far larger proportions. Thus in Sikkim, no fewer than 266 persons out of every hundred thousand suffer from this infirmity, and the rate is also high in the whole belt of country bordering on the Himalayas up to their very base in Kashmir. Thus in the Sub-Himalayan districts of the Panjab, the proportion of deaf-mutes is 216 per hundred thousand against only 72 in the rest of the province. Exactly parallel is the situation in the hilly tracts of other provinces. So on an average, in such parts of Burma, the corresponding figure exceeds 200, and in one notorious locality, viz., in the Shwegu Kachin Hill, as many as

7 per cent of the population is thus afflicted. But in the open plains, the proportion falls to a very low figure, even to 35 in some of the districts.

There is generally one other point of connection between the localities where deaf-mutism is specially prevalent in India. The afflicted area follows the course of certain rivers, and this confirms, or is rather explained by, the fact that water is the medium of infection of this infirmity. Further, as in Europe and in the United States, it is generally found in company with two other diseases, cretinism and goitre. The Census Superintendents have been able to establish connection between the three in every locality notorious for the large percentage of deaf-mutes. Thus, from statistics supplied by hospitals, the Panjab Superintendent shows that goitre is extremely common in the Sub-Himalayan tracts, and the same is the case with the hilly districts of Burma. This is the only explanation available for the high incidence of deaf-mutism in certain tracts, and the popular belief that consanguineous marriages are responsible for the prevalence of the same is completely refuted, as the Census Commissioner points out, by the fact that among the Dravidians of South India, who practise cousin-marriage extensively, deaf-mutism is extremely rare.

As in the case of other defects of congenital nature, deaf-mutism is, without exception, less prevalent among females. There may also be one other explanation for this difference. The Census Commissioner points out that deaf-mutes, by reason of the neglect to which they are subjected, seldom live long, and considering

the peculiarities of social life in India, it will not be going too far if one were to suggest that this neglect works greater havoc among females than among males. This view is also borne out to some extent by the fact that the difference in the number of such unfortunate persons is proportionately less in the higher age periods. Another interesting fact revealed by this analysis is that the percentage of deaf-mutes is highest during the age-period of 10 to 20. This is officially explained as being incorrect, the error being due to the reluctance of the parents, no doubt an existing factor, to admit the presence of deaf-mute children. Consequently, the Census officers incline to the view that this infirmity decreases from the very first with the age-periods, the most unfortunate thus being the first one, up to ten years.

In comparing the figures for 1911 with those returned at the previous Census, we are warned against being misled by the slight increase of deaf-mutes now existing in the country. At every successive Census, fresh ground has been covered, and in many cases the new area had a very large percentage of those so afflicted. We are therefore asked to compare the figures only for the areas of which the Census was taken also in 1891 and 1901, and if this suggestion is accepted, the situation is found to have considerably improved of late. The number of deaf-mutes has actually decreased after 1891. This version does not, however, take note of one fact. In the Census of 1891, many who were not deaf and dumb at birth but became so in after-life, were classed as infirm

under this subdivision. In 1911, however, the instructions to the enumerators were very strict, asking them to include only those that were deaf-mute from birth. This one fact largely vitiates the correctness of the encouraging official statement, but in spite of this obvious error, it is perhaps correct to say that the infirmity is not, like others of its kind, gaining ground in this country.

CHAPTER XXIV

BLINDNESS

A DOCTOR practising the western system of medicine will at once tell you, if you ask him why there are more blind in India than in Europe, that the indigenous systems of medicine are largely to blame. The physicians who practise them ruin the eyesight, we are accustomed to hear, of even those who may not have been suffering from anything more than the irritation caused by dust getting into the eyes, and this explanation is generally accepted as truth in many quarters. But to a statistician there are several difficulties in the way of any such easy conclusion. He knows that in many tropical countries of the world—even in civilised Europe with no worshippers of the Unani or Ayurvedic Systems of Medicine—the number of blind people is fairly large, at least larger than in India, and even in this country there are variations in the proportion of infirm people which are not easily explained by the western doctor's easy formula. In the United Provinces and the Panjab, the ratio is far larger than in Madras or Bombay, and, what looks even more strange, in the same Province, the percentage of blind persons varies considerably and not even on racial lines. The considerations that govern all these phenomena are many, and chief among them are the higher temperature,

greater dryness and bad ventilation of the houses, each of which contributes its share to the increase in the blind rate. The ill-ventilated houses are a source of danger to the eyes especially in the winter season, when our people are accustomed to ward off cold and not seldom mosquito trouble by filling the rooms with a good deal of smoke. Dust, too, has its own share in the matter, but its own existence being dependent, to a large extent, on the dryness of the climate, no separate claim on its part can be entertained. From these observations, it is no difficult task to trace the blind-rate among our Provinces and the following table is therefore self-explanatory:

Province	Blind per 100,000	
	Male	Female
India	138	145
Assam	94	87
Bengal	78	63
Behar	111	104
Bombay	136	153
Burma	131	150
Central Provinces	173	239
Madras	83	79
Panjab	249	261
United Provinces	208	234
Baroda	129	204
Mysore	104	94
Travancore	42	29

The figures also permit us to infer approximately the relative importance of the causes of blindness.

Dryness of climate seems to be the chief and the dominating one, the higher temperature and bad ventilation being only secondary causes. And as to the popular explanation among educated classes, viz., the curse of indigenous systems—I own that my knowledge of the relative supremacy of their votaries in the different Provinces is so meagre that I cannot venture to draw any general inference.

A comparison of the blind according to age and sex presents several interesting facts. We have already seen how, in the different Provinces, the ratio between the blind-rates among males and females is far from being constant. The guiding feature of their variation seems to be that "males suffer most where the blindness is least and females in those where it is most prevalent". Whereas the second of these assumptions is explicable on the basis of the "ventilation" theory, no explanation can be advanced for the first. In Bengal, women are even more secluded and house-ridden than in Madras and yet the bad ventilation of the Bengal houses does not seem to have any appreciable effect on the eyesight of its women. The explanation that women resort less to the hospitals is inapplicable, inasmuch as the practice is as observable in Madras as in the United Provinces or in Bengal. The only reason which I can gather from the statistics is that whereas in Madras and Bengal—Provinces with a small percentage of blind—their number remains practically the same as at birth or increases proportionately during the subsequent age periods, in places where the rate is high, more women turn blind after

birth; for, as we shall soon see, in the early age periods the blind-rate is higher among males and no Province is an exception to this rule. This is but an assumption, and my only reason for giving it here is that it fits in exactly with the statistical data supplied by the Census Reports.

The following table gives the blind-rate among the males and females during the different age periods:

Age Period	No. afflicted per 100,000		No. of Females afflicted per 1,000 Males
	Males	Females	
0— 5	33	23	713
5—10	56	38	646
10—15	71	53	613
15—20	88	66	695
20—25	101	71	756
25—30	99	81	789
30—35	115	112	940
35—40	121	132	928
40—45	169	191	1,071
45—50	195	235	1,019
50—55	292	351	1,175
55—60	345	450	1,102
60 & over	806	940	1,274

Thus there are more blind women than men only above the age period of 35—40 and at no time does the

disadvantage exceed 25 per cent in their case; but in the earlier age periods they are far more free than their brothers. Taking all the age periods into consideration, however, we find that more women are blind than men. Even here very striking variations are observable. In half a dozen castes, more than two thousand women are blind for every thousand males, and in one tribe in Behar, the members of the Ajat class, the proportion is recorded to be as 5 to 1. There are, however, serious reasons why this record cannot be accepted at its face value. The Census enumerators who dealt with those people seem to have had an undue partiality for round figures. Exactly two hundred women are, according to them, insane in that caste, for every 1,000 men, and the percentage of deaf-mutes is identically equal; and in the case of the only other infirmity, leprosy, the proportion of the afflicted among women is just one-third, not one more or less, of those among males. Evidently the figures are too absurd for any definite comparison; even so it may be inferred that the Ajats have an unduly large number of blind women. This is one extreme, and the other is no less striking. In some castes, the blind-rate among women is only half of that among men, but nowhere is the variation so marked as 5 to 1. It should not, however, be supposed from these statements that blindness is guided by racial or communal distinctions. Naturally, the higher the social scale, the smaller is the percentage of the blind, since among the more cultured, better care is taken of eyesight. But even here there

is a strange exception. The Malayalam Brahmanas, though occupying a higher social scale than many castes in Madras, have a higher blind rate than all except one, and, in some castes, sections living in different places and surroundings have different proportions of blind people.

CHAPTER XXV

LEPROSY

Like blindness, leprosy is decreasing in India and is now practically non-existent in many parts. At one time, it was believed that the infirmity was on the increase but the Leprosy Commission of 1891 which inquired into the question issued a reassuring Report. It also pointed out how the number of people actually suffering from that loathsome disease were less than the estimated number by at least 10 per cent. It is, however, believed that the figures recorded in 1901 and 1911 are not so inaccurate, and if at all they err, they err in the opposite direction, especially where females are concerned. So far medical men have not been able to find out the causes of the disease and consequently it is not possible to suggest any reasons for the fluctuations in the proportion of lepers in the different localities. In the same Province, we find this ratio varying from 1 to 30 per 10,000 of the population, and it is not possible to trace any climatic resemblance between the parts affected. Further in several localities, the proportion of lepers has considerably decreased during the past thirty years and this result is not due to any action

such as the segregation of lepers which is only a very recent development in this country.

According to Census figures, leprosy is nearly three times more frequent among males than among females. Taking the country as a whole, 51 males and 18 females per hundred thousand of each sex are recorded to be suffering from this infirmity. The Census Commissioner believes—it is so far only an assumption—that the figures relating to females are very inaccurate and suggests that the error may be as high as even 40 per cent. The above figures are, however, substantiated to a large extent by the returns supplied by the leper asylums in the country, in which the number of males is nearly twice that of females, and it may be assumed that the difference between this proportion and that recorded in the Census tables is due to the greater reluctance of women to enter the asylums. The same view is further confirmed by the fact that the proportion of lepers remains almost the same for both sexes during the different age periods, the largest percentage accruing between the ages of 50 to 60. The assumption of the Census Commissioner, if true, must make the figures more inaccurate between the age periods of 15 to 30, the time when few families naturally like to admit the existence of a leper among them; but no such inference can be drawn from the figures or the graph in the Census Report.

We have altogether only 73 leper asylums in this country containing in all five thousand lepers, or less

than five per cent of the total number. It is a desirable aim to segregrate all the lepers but so far doctors have not been able to find out any necessity for the same. The Leprosy Commission of 1891 came to the conclusion that no conclusive evidence exists to show that leprosy is contagious, and further established the fact, from investigation on the spot, that the children of lepers rarely suffer from the same malady. During the two decades that have followed this authoritative announcement, no fresh light has been thrown on the subjects of their inference, and the presence of a leper outside the asylum is not such a danger as it is often believed to be. All the same, the evidence at our disposal being so inconclusive, it is advisable to avoid all possible trouble, and the first step in this connection is the discouragement of lepers from interfering in matters where their contact might be undesirable. The Leprosy Commission pointed out in this connection that afflicted persons should not be permitted to trade in food-stuffs or sell sweets or engage in such vocations as laundry or dairy keeping; but as the Madras Census Report will show, matters are now far from being satisfactory. In the single Province of Madras, nearly 300 lepers are engaged in trades in which their presence is harmful, and no time should be lost in setting matters right.

CHAPTER XXVI

OCCUPATION

The chapter on Occupation in the Census Report is one of the most instructive, the figures at the end giving a fund of information concerning the material aspect of our life. From the lengthy introduction to the chapter, which I must confess makes the subsequent paragraphs rather tedious, it is plain that no efforts were spared to secure correct and useful figures at the last Census. Fortunately this operation did not require any drastic modification of the mode of division of the main heads of occupation. But the fact that, at the Census of 1901, the same amount of care was not bestowed on the collection of accurate information, detracts greatly from the value of the figures collected in 1911 for purposes of comparison. The importance of the greater care now bestowed on this operation will be realised only at the next Census, and that too on condition that the Census Commissioner in 1921 does not lay claim to greater accuracy. All the same, we shall examine how far the figures for 1911 differ from those for 1901 under

the main headings. Here they are, the unit being a million :

	1901	1911	p. c. difference
Exploitation of the surface of the Earth	191·9	220·1	14·8
Extraction of Minerals ...	·23	·51	120·3
Industry	34·3	34·2	—·7
Transport	3·7	4·8	29·4
Trade	17·8	17·2	—3·3
Public Force	2·09	2·25	7·6
Public Administration ...	3·16	2·45	—22·2
Professions and Liberal Arts.	4.5	5·1	13·0
Domestic Service	4·6	4·5	—2·9
Unproduction	4·5	3·3	—27·2
Rest	17·7	9·0	—49·1

From the standpoint of the importance of occupation, the most noteworthy change is seen in the first subdivision. The increase there is twice as large as the total rise in the population of the country; but that is said to be greatly due to a change in enumeration in two provinces. The fall in the number of persons engaged in industry is rather ominous and testifies to a large extent to the disappearance of handicrafts, such as weaving. The fall in the number of traders is largely due to the decrease in the number of dealers in food-stuffs which fell during the decade from 10 to 9·1 millions. The difference under the heading of Public Administration is only nominal, being due to the classification of doctors, lawyers, etc., in Government Service under the next heading.

From this table the predominance of certain industries is also plain. Thus Exploitation of the surface

of the Earth, which strange phrase includes only agriculture, pasturing, hunting and fishing, is responsible for nearly 72 per cent of the total population, and the next largest subdivision, Industry, but a very small one compared to the previous one, takes away only 11 per cent of the total population. These figures, of course, differ in the various Provinces. Thus the Panjab has the smallest agricultural population, less than even 60 per cent, but the largest percentage engaged in industries. Quite the opposite is the case with Behar and Orissa, a Province more than 75 per cent of whose inhabitants are engaged in agriculture. Bombay has the largest percentage of people engaged in commerce, with the Panjab closely following its record, whereas in the neighbouring Provinces of Agra and Oudh, commerce claims the smallest proportion. These variations are not in the least surprising when we consider the physical conditions and attitude of the people of the Provinces concerned, though some facts are surprising to those who are unacquainted with broad outlines of village life in the country. Thus to most people of Madras, not to speak of other Provinces, it will be a surprise to be told that their Province contains the largest percentage of persons engaged in industries, larger than even Bombay with its cotton mills and Bengal with its jute mills and coal-fields. Classified according to religion, the above figures reveal no striking variations. As is to be expected, Christians are not found in large numbers in the main occupation of the country, their strong point being public administration and the liberal arts;

it may also be stated in passing that Muhammadans take rather more freely to industry, transport, military and domestic service, and the Hindus to trade and the professions and liberal arts.

It is noteworthy that in all the above comparisons, the persons included are not merely workers but also the dependents on those workers. Among the latter class of people are included all those who do not earn even a part of their livelihood, such as children and women, who merely look after household work. In every hundred of the population, no less than 50 are dependents according to this definition; but if we exclude children, their proportion goes down to 31 per cent. The workers are fewest at Mysore (31 per cent), Bengal 36 per cent and Travancore 41 per cent, whereas in the remaining Provinces, they exceed the average.

So simple still is our village life that on an average 7,200 of every 10,000 are either landlords and tenants, or labourers. Among the groups not engaged on the exploitation of the surface of the Earth, the only noteworthy ones are those of cotton workers (2 per cent), and basket-makers, grocers, mendicants, grain dealers and money-lenders, carpenters—each contributing one per cent to the total village population. It may be of interest to note here the essential difference perceptible in the presence of these workers in our villages in India and in Burma. In the former every kind of worker is observable in every village but in the Mongol villages, each group contains a separate village, specialising in any one of these occupations. Thus there will be,

in a group of villages, a separate colony of blacksmiths, one or more of potters, one of carpenters and one of wheelwrights. It is, however, to be noted that even in India, the number of self-contained villages is gradually disappearing in the wake of western civilisation, but that does not lessen the difference in the type of Indian and Burmese villages.

CHAPTER XXVII

CASTE GOVERNMENT

Most people in India are under a double Government. There is the State controlling the civil activities of the people, and there is the caste headman, panchayat or swami guiding the religious and social life, even in some cases wielding the same powers as the Government. Government by caste is not often felt by us by reason of our acquaintance with it in daily life; but all the same, there are some castes, "sub-sects" is perhaps a better term, in which the control by the State is far less potent. For such offences as even assault, theft and adultery, the caste panchayat punishes the criminal, who very often finds it more difficult to escape the punishment of the caste government than that of the State. This is very obvious in the case of the lower castes, specially the hill tribes among which the arm of the State is not sufficiently comprehensive. The control which these institutions wield is often extremely varied; some take cognisance of the serious offences only and in many cases there is even a difference of opinion regarding the culpability of the different crimes. This is but natural when we

consider the vast field over which these institutions are spread and also the little opportunity for free intercourse between the different castes and sub-castes.

The offences of which the caste tribunals take notice are many; the following are the most common:

(1) Eating, drinking or smoking with a member of a sub-caste.
(2) Killing sacred animals such as the cow.
(3) Homicide or murder.
(4) Getting maggots in a wood.
(5) Being beaten by a man of a lower caste.
(6) Abusing or beating relatives held in reverence.
(7) Following prohibited occupations.
(8) Breach of caste etiquette, such as leaving a dinner party before others have finished.
(9) Naming or touching relatives who should not be so named or touched.

Among the less common functions of a caste tribunal, the following may be noted:

(1) Finding a suitable partner for a marriageable boy or girl.
(2) Widow re-marriage.
(3) Partition of property.
(4) The decision of minor quarrels, such as small thefts.
(5) Questions of occupations of a disreputable nature.

As I have already pointed out, these powers are wielded the more commonly, the less advanced the caste, and among my readers there may be several in whose caste there is no agency to take cognisance of such crimes at all. In the castes occupying a higher social scale, the chief offences now punished by caste government are sea-voyage, and inter-dining; but even in the case of these, the

control is rapidly weakening. Not so in many of the sub-sects however, among whom the new leaven has not sufficiently worked. To them the caste tribunal is a matter of dread especially where the sect concerned happens to include a few families and migration is not easy to the victim.

The caste tribunal takes several forms in the different provinces or sects. The most common is the panchayat, elected when necessary from the caste-men. The selection falls naturally on the richest or the most influential; and in many instances, office is held permanently. The panchayat is often replaced by a chief, the swami, who, too, often invokes the assistance of a meeting of the elders of the caste. Rarely is there an appellate body except where the first tribunal consists of a headman who has to get his decrees confirmed by a panchayat. Sometimes, the same caste possesses several tribunals, one for each village or group of villages. These tribunals are summoned generally by the aggrieved person who goes to each member and requests him to be present or, where it is possible and needed, requests their presence by a written requisition. The panchayat meets in a temple, or under a pipal or banyan-tree, and often witnesses are summoned on both sides. The witnesses are sworn in, as in a trial before a regular court of law, the only difference being that the taking of the oath is more real in these primitive tribunals. The oath takes the form of swearing by the Ganga, or the cow, or the life of the children of the witnesses or parties, and very often

where this preliminary is considered essential, truth comes out easily—more easily than in most courts of law. The parties or the witnesses are afraid that by telling a lie, they may lose their children or be consigned to eternal life in Hell, so that if the offence is minor and the punishment is expected to be mild, the parties risk a conviction rather than endure the consequences of telling a falsehood. The decision is sometimes arrived at in a curious way. Two pieces of paper, tied together generally in a few *tolasi* leaves, are placed before the parties and the person who happens to draw the fortunate "lot" wins the case. This easy way of dispensing justice sometimes takes different forms. Thus in the Central Provinces, slips of paper containing the names of Rama and Ravana are placed on the head of some idol. The unfortunate person who takes up the "Ravana" slip is declared to be the loser. Rarely the trial takes more exacting forms. Thus in the case of serious offences such as adultery, some caste tribunals require the woman to dip her hand into boiling oil, her innocence to be proved by her being unhurt. Refusal to submit to the test is of course taken to be an admission of guilt.

Penalties take several forms more varied than the enlightened Governments of the day have been able to discover. The commonest, however, is a fine, to be utilised in giving one or three feasts to the castemen. It is sometimes made a condition in this kind of sentence that the victim should be absent from the feast, held, of course, in his own house, his presence

being admitted only at the third feast. In some cases, different places are assigned for the diners; by the side of a river or a tank; on the summit of a hill or wherever the panchayat may think it proper and convenient to have it. Often, it is laid down that the dinner should be accompanied with pots of toddy and arrack. This kind of punishment is common among the lower classes, where, as I have already pointed out, caste tribunals are most efficient. Among the higher ones, the punishment takes only three forms, fines, prayaschittam ceremony, or excommunication, the latter being resorted to only in extreme cases. The fines range from a quarter of an anna to hundreds of rupees, the lowest amount being often considered the most disgraceful. Among the more picturesque punishments, observable only in low caste people, the following may be taken as typical. "In the Maharatta districts, shaving the head and moustaches in the case of a man who goes wrong, or cutting off a lock of hair in the case of a woman, is a fashionable punishment." In some castes in the Central Provinces, the offender "has to collect the shoes of all his caste fellows, and carry them on his head, or shave one side of his moustaches or in low castes permit the others to wipe their hands after dinner on his head". The Chamars of the Panjab "insist on the seducer sucking the abducted woman's breast (which amounts to recognising her thenceforward as his mother), and vigorously enforces excommunication if one or both of the parties insist on illicit relationship". I shall not give further instances lest

their number should lead the reader to infer that such offences are common in the country, whereas as a matter of fact, they exist only in low caste tribes.

Regarding the whole system of caste government as it exists in India at the present day, one fact is specially noteworthy. The tribunals are losing their value. Edicts of excommunication are treated with contempt in some castes, the excommunicated persons and their friends forming a separate sub-sect and thus overcoming the rigours of excommunication. How terrible was this punishment a hundred years ago—and the description is even to-day applicable in certain castes, especially in the case of poor people—can be seen from the following passage quoted in the Census Report from a book written in 1817 :

> Expulsion from the caste, which is the penalty inflicted on those who are guilty of infringing the accustomed rules or of any other offence which would bring disgrace on the tribe, if it remained unavenged, is in truth an unsupportable punishment. It is a kind of civil excommunication which debars the unhappy object of it from all intercourse whatever with his fellow-creatures. He is a man, as it were, dead to the world. He is no longer in the society of men. By losing his caste, the Hindu is bereft of friends and relations and often of his wife and children who will rather forsake him than share in his miserable lot. No one dares to eat with him or even to pour him out a drop of water. If he has marriageable daughters, they are shunned. No other girls can be approached by his sons. Wherever he appears, he is scorned and pointed to as an outcaste. If he sinks under the grievous curse, his body is suffered to rot on the place where he dies.

It may be of interest to give here a brief account of the " Caste Cutchery " which the East India Company formed " for hearing and deciding cases relating

to caste matters". The functions of this court are described thus by Verelst, Governor of Bengal from 1767 to 1769:

All nations have their courts of ecclesiastical jurisdiction distinct from the administration of civil justice, in some with a more limited, in others with a more extensive, authority. The followers of Brahma in Bengal have their caste cutcheries or courts, to take cognisance of all matters relative to several castes or tribes of the Hindu religion. . . . . The authority of these courts is very extensive. A degradation from the caste by their sentence is a species of excommunication attended with the most dreadful effects, rendering the offender an outcaste from society. But as the weight of the punishment depends merely upon the opinion of the people, it is unnecessary to say that it cannot be inflicted by the English Governor, unless the mandate of the Governor could instantly change the religious sentiments of a nation. Neither can a man once degraded be restored, but by the general suffrage of his own tribe, the sanction of the Brahmans and the superadded concurrence of the Supreme Civil Power.

The head of these courts naturally wielded powerful influence, as is evident from the following passage in the indictment of Warren Hastings by Mr. Burke that the Government was not always careful in this selection: "He has put his own menial servant, he has enthroned him, I say, on the first seat of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, which has to decide upon the castes of all those people including their rank, their family, their honour, their happiness here, and, in their judgment, their salvation hereafter. Under the awe of this power, no man dared to breathe a murmur against his tyranny. Fortified in this security, he says, who complains of me? No, none

of us dare complain of you, says the trembling Gentoo. No; your menial servant has my caste in his power. I shall not trouble your lordships with mentioning others; it was enough that Cantoo Balu, and Gango Gobind Sing, names to which your lordships are to be familiarised hereafter, it is enough that these persons had the caste and character of all the people of Bengal in their hands."

At the present moment, only in certain Native States does the temporal head of the Government also wield any influence on caste tribunals. Thus in several States, the Raja is the final arbitrator in caste disputes and several instances of this power are mentioned in the Census Reports. In one of these typical instances, the ruler excommunicated a whole section of people who expressed dissatisfaction at his verdict in a sensational caste case. The result was that the recalcitrant members were deprived of the services of even the barbers, washermen and priests. "So effectual and binding was this order, that not only did the barbers, washermen and priests of the State, who had hitherto served them, refuse to work for them, but the services could not be obtained even of barbers, washermen and priests residing outside the State. This order was strictly enforced for some time. The men of the caste concerned in this affair are generally clean shaven, and very well dressed but when the dispute was eventually settled, the persons affected by the order had long dirt-matted beards, the hair of their heads was in long strands and filthy in the extreme, and their clothes were beyond description for

uncleanliness." Of course on rare occasions do the Rajas use this power, but where it is used, it is even now very effective, far more so than in the case of ordinary caste tribunals.

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